

994
E L E M E N T S

O F

P U N C T U A T I O N : 22

CONTAINING

R E M A R K S

O N A N

“ESSAY ON PUNCTUATION;”

A N D

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

O N S O M E

P A S S A G E S I N M I L T O N .

By D A V I D S T E E L , junior. A

Grammatici certant, et adhuc sub judice lis est. — Hor.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the Author; and sold by Mess. G. G. J. and J. Robinson, Pater-noster Row; Mr. WALTER, Charing-Cross; Mr. DUBRETT, Piccadilly; Mr. WHIELDON, Fleet-Street; and Mess. STEEL and Son, Union-Row, Tower-Hill.

M.DCC.LXXXVI.

26

THE MUSEUM

OF THE HISTORY AND

ANTHROPOLOGY

OF THE HUMAN RACE

AND OF THE CIVILIZATION



AND OF THE CIVILIZATION

OF THE HUMAN RACE

AND OF THE CIVILIZATION

OF THE HUMAN RACE

AND OF THE CIVILIZATION

OF THE HUMAN RACE

E L E M E N T S
OF
P U N C T U A T I O N.

[PRICE THREE SHILLINGS AND SIX-PENCE, SEWED.]

J. E. M. E. N. S.

NO. 1

CONSTITUTION

11

H

me

vig

co

du

fib

pr

ho

INTRODUCTION.

HAD the author of the following Elements been actuated by that mean spirit of criticism which finds invigoration only where errors abound, he could have made no apology for introducing them to public notice; but, sensible of being impelled by a wish to improve the materials of education, he hopes to meet with the reception that
good

* INTRODUCTION.

good intentions merit, although he fail in adding even an atom to learning. Previously, however, to his entering upon the subject, he takes this opportunity of quoting an anecdote in the History of Punctuation; which, having no connexion in any particular page of the following sheets, he conceives, is better introduced by way of a prefatory digression. It is related by Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Lord Lyttleton; and, although the importance of just punctuation cannot be doubted, nor its efficacy in marking the sense disputed, it is a corroborative of the estimation in which it was holden by a man, who added to his nobility a strong affection for literature.

“ His

INTRODUCTION, xi

“ His last literary production was his
“ *History of Henry the Second*, elaborated
“ by the searches and deliberations of
“ twenty years, and published with such
“ anxiety as vanity only can dictate.

“ The story of this publication is re-
“ markable. The whole work was print-
“ ed twice over, a great part of it three
“ times, and many sheets four or five
“ times. The booksellers paid for the
“ first impression; but the charges and
“ repeated operations of the press were
“ at the expence of the author, whose
“ ambitious accuracy is known to have
“ cost him at least a thousand pounds.
“ He began to print in 1755. Three
“ volumes appeared in 1764, a second
“ edition of them in 1767, a third edi-
“ tion.

xii INTRODUCTION.]

. “tion in 1768, and the conclusion in
“ 1771.

“ Andrew Reid, a man not without
“ considerable abilities, and not unac-
“ quainted with letters or with life, un-
“ dertook to persuade Lyttleton, as he
“ had persuaded himself, that he was
“ master of the secret of punctuation;
“ and, as fear begets credulity, he was
“ employed, I know not at what price,
“ to point the pages of *Henry the Second*.
“ The book was at last pointed and
“ printed, and sent into the world. Lyt-
“ tleton took money for his copy, of
“ which, when he had paid the *pointer*,
“ he probably gave the rest away; for he
“ was very liberal to the indigent.

“ When time brought the History to
“ a third edition, Reid was either dead

“ or

INTRODUCTION. xiii

“ or discarded ; and the superintendence
“ of typography and punctuation was
“ committed to a man, originally a comb-
“ maker, but then known by the style
“ of Doctor. Something uncommon was
“ probably expected, and something un-
“ common was at last done ; for to the
“ Doctor’s edition is appended, what the
“ world had hardly seen before, a list of
“ errors in nineteen pages.”

Such was the conduct of lord Lyttle-
ton ; which Dr. Johnson attributes to an
over-anxious vanity. To render similar
applications unnecessary, and to extend
the knowledge of punctuation, have been
the motives for submitting to the pub-
lic the following sheets ; the author of
which laments that there never has been
a complete system of points, although
there

xiv INTRODUCTION.

there are many detached pieces that contain divided merits.

The Principles of Grammar form a solid foundation for Elements of Punctuation; and, if he could have raised his superstructure in adequate perfection to his base, he might have indeed exclaimed *Εὐγενεα*; but to such talents he dares not lay a claim. Zeal, he knows, will effect much; and, although the praise of having shewn *ingenium par materia* be too great for him to expect, yet, he trusts, his efforts will bear the appearance of strong inclination for the perfection of philology: he therefore launches his bark into the ocean of criticism, with some fears of its quick sands.

INTRODUCTION.

sands, and with some confidence of procuring buoyancy by exertion.



ELEMENTS

INTRODUCTION.

And with some confidence of pro-
ceeding business by extension.



E

to
tio
to
be
po
cip
spe
tha

E L E M E N T S

O F

P U N C T U A T I O N .

GRAMMAR, which ought to be the basis of punctuation, has seldom been considered as adequate to the purpose : too much accommodation to the reader, and too little attention to grammatical construction, have usually been the sources whence the doctrine of points has been deduced. But such principles I conceive to be erroneous, however specious ; as indeed must be all systems that are founded upon varying authority.

A

I shall

I shall, however, in this place, wave the pursuit in an argumentative way, and proceed to examine those rules, in the “Essay on Punctuation,” that appear to me defective; respectfully premising, that my opinion is meant to be urged with all possible deference to the author, and to our common tribunal, the public: but, should any sentence, that bears the smallest appearance of a peremptory diction, escape my pen, I must request it to be remembered, that my pen, in such cases, will not faithfully present the sentiment of my mind.

PUNCTUATION. 3

*In the following pages, the quotations from
the "Essay on Punctuation" are on the
left side, and the Remarks are opposite.*

4 ELEMENTS OF

Essay on Punctuation.

Page 23.

4. Two substantives, connected by the disjunctive *OR*, may admit of a comma between them; because a disjunctive does not form so close a connection, as a copulative.

EXAMPLES.

Most romances are miserable rhapsodies,
or dangerous incentives.

Milton too frequently uses technical words, *or* terms of art.

The coarsest picture will affect the mind
of a peasant, *or* even a Hottentot.

5. When the latter part of the sentence is short, the comma is better omitted.

EXAMPLES.

The most vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony *or* nature.

The

PUNCTUATION. 5

Remarks.

This rule is by far too general, and is even improperly restrained by that which follows it. It is allowed, that punctuation should not only direct the reader in pause, but should point to the sense of an author; and, in this case, it is possible to make the comma perform its double office, by altering these rules as under.

Two substantives, connected by the disjunctive OR, should have a comma between them, if the latter substantive be explanatory of the former.

EXAMPLES.

Milton too frequently uses technical words, or terms of art.

The ancient actors of tragedy wore the cothurnus, or buskin.

The comic actors wore the sock, or sandal.

It is readily perceptible, that, in the preceding examples, the latter substantives

A 3 are

Essay on Punctuation.

The ancient actors of tragedy wore the cothurnus *or* buskin.

The comic actors wore the sock *or* sandal.

Libertines call religion bigotry *or* superstition.

PUNCTUATION. 7

Remarks.

are explanatory of the former: in reading, they would require a different, and generally a lower, modulation of voice.

When the former substantive will admit the word EITHER to precede it, the latter substantive cannot be explanatory of the former; consequently, a comma is unnecessary.

EXAMPLES.

Most romances are [*either*] miserable rhapsodies or dangerous incentives.

Libertines call religion [*either*] bigotry or superstition.

The preceding rule will hold good with adjectives in similar positions.

EXAMPLES.

You certainly must be insane, or mad.

You certainly must be [*either*] mad or foolish.

The difference is obvious, and it is submitted as a just discrimination.

8 ELEMENTS OF

Essay on Punctuation.

Page 29.

- II. TWO ADJECTIVES, not connected by a conjunction, nor depending on each other in sense or construction, may admit of a comma between them.

EXAMPLES.

Beware of a censorious, sour severity.

A proud, supercilious behaviour makes a person contemptible.

Plain, honest truth wants no artificial colouring.

Pure, unfulled virtue transcends the comprehension of the wicked.

True religion gives a native, unaffected ease to the behaviour.

Page 31.

Remarks.

Here the first adjective, only, is insulated from its concordant substantive, although it belongs to the substantive equally with the latter: it is not, because the one is farther removed than the other, that it connects less; both have an equal dependence, and nothing but an equality of point can be proper.

Commas, placed after each adjective, would be too rigid; and yet that, if the commas be not totally expunged, is the only way to preserve the grammatical construction. I rather think the points may be here dispensed with*.

If

* The first adjective may be considered as acting adverbially upon the second; and therefore admits no separation from it, or from its substantive. *This observation is from a hint of my ingenious friend, Mr. Adams, of Edmonton.*

Essay on Punctuation.

Page 31.

14. THREE OR MORE ADJECTIVES, belonging to the same substantive, without any copulatives, are separated by commas.

EXAMPLES.

Ulysses was a wise, eloquent, cautious, and intrepid hero.

Julius Cæsar wrote in a clear, natural, correct, flowing style.

The Italian is a liquid, smooth, effeminate language.

Sacred history is a simple, chaste, faithful, dispassionate, impartial detail of facts.

The most innocent pleasures are the sweetest, the most sensible, the most affecting, and the most lasting.

PUNCTUATION. 111

Remarks.

If we were to insert a conjunction copulative between all the adjectives in the opposite examples, would that alter the punctuation? No. It might destroy the elegance and harmony of the sentence; but rules, to be just, should apply alike to all combinations of words, whether inelegant or otherwise; and, therefore,

Three or more adjectives, belonging to the same substantive, with or without copulatives, should be separated by commas.

Another objection arises from the omission of a comma after the last adjective. In the first example, *intrepid* is not more particularly connected with *hero* than *wise* or *eloquent*: all equally belong to the substantive, and ought to have the same degree of separation or connection. A similar reason has been offered, on the other side, for admitting a comma before the conjunction *and*, which perfectly agrees with my opinion; and both cases seem to be

Essay on Punctuation.

In the first sentence a comma is admitted before the conjunction *and*; because *intrepid* is not more particularly connected with *cautious*, than with *wise* or *eloquent*.

Page 43.

24. Some ADVERBS are very properly preceded by a comma.

EXAMPLES.

Never let your mind be absent in company, *especially* among your superiors.

You cannot conceive, *how* greatly exercise contributes to enliven the imagination.

Chance never built the least cottage, *much less* the world.

A false delicacy is affectation, *not* politeness.

True courage is exerted in repelling, *not* in offering injuries.

This world is a state of pilgrimage, *not* a place of rest. &c. &c.

Where,

PUNCTUATION. 13

Remarks.

be in direct analogy. The rule, cleared of these objections, might stand thus :

Three or more adjectives, belonging to the same substantive, are separated from themselves, and from their concordant substantive, by commas.

This rule and the following leave punctuation as indeterminate, with respect to the particular part meant to be regulated, as if none had been given. The expressions, "*some Adverbs,*" and "*Adverbs of NO IMPORTANCE,*" are vague, and inconsistent with that perspicuity which the subject requires. I must object to the utility of their insertion ; for the exceptions are too numerous to render them of general use. In some sentences a monosyllabic adverb may be of the utmost consequence, when, perhaps, one of many syllables may be trifling, and merely expletive ; and it is impossible to say what adverbs are important,

Essay on Punctuation.

Where, when, hence, whence, whither, whenever, wherever, and other words of the same nature, may be properly called adverbial conjunctions; because they partake of the nature both of adverbs and conjunctions: of conjunctions, as they conjoin sentences; of adverbs, as they denote the attributes, either of time, or of place.

Page 45.

25. ADVERBS OF NO IMPORTANCE need not be separated from the rest of the sentence by two commas. It would be better to omit the following points.

EXAMPLES.

Beauty, *perhaps*, depends principally on the mind.

There is, *surely*, a pleasure in beneficence.

The voice of praise, *indeed*, is sweet.

Listen not, *however*, to the sycophant.

Flattery is, *certainly*, pernicious.

Nay,

PUNCTUATION. 15

Remarks.

tant, for their importance depends upon that of the sentence to which they belong; and it is a false principle to say that certain points depend upon certain words; they depend upon *sentences*, and not upon *words*. As the rules of prosody are never to be violated, in the school-exercises of even nonsense-verses, so should the rules of punctuation be equally adapted to trifling, as well as to important, phraseology.

The adverbs in the opposite examples are introduced in a parenthetical manner; and, for that reason, perhaps, may require commas before and after. In the first example, the adverb conveys a doubt; in the second, something of an interrogative nature; and the third, fourth, and fifth, convey a kind of acquiescence to some preceding remark. However, in a different position, and with different contexts, they may convey other ideas: but they, surely, cannot be deemed of *no* importance.

How

26 ELEMENTS OF

Essay on Punctuation.

Nay, besides, moreover, again, first, secondly, thirdly, lastly, once more, above all, on the contrary, in the next place, in short, and all other words and phrases of the same kind, at the beginning of sentences, may be separated from the context by a comma.

Page 46.

26. A comma is not improperly inserted before a PREPOSITION, when the sentence is LONG ENOUGH to require a pause.

EXAMPLES.

There is a charm in modest diffidence,
above the force of words.

The

PUNCTUATION.

17

Remarks.

How frequently may this admit of exceptions! How frequently, too, may these be used as prepositions, and mislead the uninformed in grammar: for instance;

Besides this, I have nothing more to offer.

Above all other things prize virtue.

On the contrary side were placed the heroes.

Other sentences may be formed by these, upon a similar construction with the above; and, although it must be evident to grammarians, it may tend to misguide others. One word, used at one time as an adverb, and at another as a preposition, may appear paradoxical; but, the fact being so, it should be noticed, in order to prevent error.

What is the principle of these two rules? (26 and 27?) *The length of the sentence.* To prove how unstable this principle is, let us select from each an example.

B

From

18 ELEMENTS OF

Essay on Punctuation.

The bees construct their cells, *according* to the nicest rules of geometry.

No author should attempt to divert his reader, *at* the expence of any man's private character.

The Deity stands unseen, *behind* the workmanship of his own hands.

The generality of men make themselves miserable, *by* desiring what is superfluous.

The ancients separated the corn from the ear, *by* causing an ox to trample on the sheaves.

Page 49.

27. When the sentence is SHORT, the comma is unnecessary.

EXAMPLES.

The planets revolve *round* the sun.

They derive their light and heat *from* his rays.

They are filled *with* proper inhabitants.

The fixed stars are suns *to* other systems.

The

PUNCTUATION. 19

Remarks.

From 26.

The earth is but a small particle of dust, *in* the bosom of nature.

From 27.

Innumerable worlds lie *beyond* this visible scene.

By the 26th rule, the sentence should be LONG ENOUGH to require a pause; and, by the 27th, to render the comma unnecessary, the sentence should be SHORT. In the first quotation the sentence consists of five words, and in the latter of four: five words, then, are a long sentence, and four are a short one. Thus far is implied by our author; but let us consider the following example.

“ I next advanced towards the grand support of
“ the garrison, and found it but feebly manned.”

Is it possible to admit a comma before *towards* without causing an improper suspension of the voice? I think not; although this sentence consists of seven words, constituting a long sentence. The

B 2

criteria

Essay on Punctuation.

The earth is a mere atom *in* the universe.

Innumerable worlds lie *beyond* this visible scene.

Page 52.

29. Sentences generally require a comma, or a pause, where there is a CONNECTIVE PARTICLE, or a word, introducing a NEW MEMBER, which may be separated from the preceding part.

Conjunctions are JOINTS, where the body of a sentence ought to be divided.

Some of the principal conjunctions are, *and, as, because, before, both, but, either, even, except, if, lest, nor, or, provided, since, so, than, that, though, till, unless, when, while, whether.*

EXAMPLE.

The faculties of every animal are impaired by disuse, *and* strengthened by exercise.

PUNCTUATION. 21

Remarks.

criteria here are vague ; for, what I might deem a long sentence, another, with better lungs and breath, might judge contrarily of.

I should almost have consented to this rule, had I not perceived the following example to militate against grammatical construction, *viz.*

“ A man of sense soon perceives, whether his company is acceptable or not.”

The construction of this sentence is simple ; it consists of a nominative case, a verb, and a sentence serving as the objective case.

“ Whether his company is acceptable or not,” is the complex objective case to the verb *perceives*. A division therefore here is inadmissible ; and I think the rule would hold good, were there an exception *when the connective word introduces, and forms a part of, the objective case to the verb immediately preceding.*

Essay on Punctuation.

Page 72.

39. A comma between the nominative case and the verb, when neither a parenthesis, nor any phrase equivalent to a parenthesis, intervenes, is improper; unless the LENGTH of the sentence should require a pause.

EXAMPLES.

The society of ladies, is a school of politeness.

A great book, is a great evil.

The law of nature, is the law of God.

The epic poet, is supposed to be inspired.

An ordinary reader, cannot relish what is sublime.

The arrangement of words, contributes to perspicuity.

Every

PUNCTUATION. 23

Remarks.

No single uncompounded sentence, consisting of a nominative case, a verb, and its objective case, can be so long as to justify the insertion of a comma. As the natural connexion between those parts of speech, and their dependence upon each other, would be divided, the comma, so inserted, must be improper. A pause in reading, indeed, as mentioned in page 73, may be allowable; but not a pause of such length as the comma indicates.

There would likewise arise a difference of opinion, in whether the pause should follow the nominative case or precede the objective case. There are infinite inflections and pauses of the voice, necessary to good reading, which the present points can never denote; but these modulations must be intirely left to the discretion and feeling of the reader.

I know nothing more difficult than to distinguish the degree of connexion that

B 4

requires

Essay on Punishment.

Every part of matter, swarms with living creatures.

It would be better to omit the points in these sentences.

PUNCTUATION.

Remarks.

requires a colon, and that which demands a semi-colon. This general discrimination, however, I think, might be established to serve as a criterion.

A semi-colon may be used, in dividing sentences, where the *grammatical construction* is not fully complete.

A colon, on the contrary, is admissible only where *grammatical construction* is quite perfect.

Notwithstanding, however, the difficulty of determining the precise places of the colon and semi-colon, I am clearly of opinion, that, in reading, no material error can arise from the substitution of one for the other; and those, who are acquainted with the proper use of the comma, will seldom be at a loss in the other points.

These

ELEMENTS OF

Essay on Punctuation,

Page 103. Chap. VII.

“EXCLAMATION is the voice of nature,
“when she is agitated, amazed, or trans-
“ported.

“In reading, it requires an elevation
“of the voice, as the term exclamation
“implies; and such a pause, as may seem
“to give room for a momentary reflec-
“tion.”

Page

PUNCTUATION. 57

Remarks.

These words proceed from the author of the Introduction to the Study of Polite Literature; nor should I have taken exception to them, did they not appear to be adopted by the author of this work, who certainly conveys his acquiescence thereto, at the same time that he declares the source whence he obtained them.

It is not in all cases that an exclamation requires an elevation of the voice: frequent are the situations where the voice should be depressed. The derivation certainly implies *a crying out (exclama)*; but practice has demonstrated, that, where this point is requisite, it is not always that an elevation of the voice is necessary; but that the sentences should be pronounced in consonance with the feelings they are supposed to excite. Nature, when “agitated, amazed, or transported,” does not uniformly *exclaim*: she sometimes falters; sometimes scarcely utters. Under such

Essay on Punctuation.

These words proceed from the author
the introduction to the Story of Yohie
and the author; and should I have taken
them to be the words of the author, they
would appear to be the words of the author
of the story, and the author of the story
would appear to be the author of the story
and the author of the story would appear to be
the author of the story.

It is not in all cases that an individual

reaches an elevation of the voice:

Page 126.

6. Some writers on punctuation ma

6. Some writers on punctuation maintain, that the parenthetical marks should be accompanied with every point, which the sense would require, if the parenthesis were omitted. But the comma, if not the semi-colon and the colon, is superfluous; because the pause, which is necessarily made at the beginning and the end of the parenthesis, while the reader or the speaker is giving his voice a different modulation, is, at least, equal

PUNCTUATION. 29.

~~REMARKS~~

such impressions, an elevated voice would destroy the effect of the passage, and present but an enfeebled delineation of the passions.

That I might not be accused of misrepresentation, I have here used the author's term, *note of exclamation*, although I think it not half so expressive as the generally adopted term, *note of admiration*.

I confess myself to be one of those who contend that a parenthesis demands every point which the sense would require, if the parenthesis were omitted, except when the parenthesis is interrogative, or exclamatory.

It is my opinion, that the parenthetical marks are merely to shew the insertion of an oblique passage, and convey no precise time of pause, other than the principal sentence would require, without those marks :

Essay on Punctuation.

equal in time to a comma, and is sufficiently marked by the parenthetical characters, without the addition of that point. In this case, the comma is indeed frequently and very properly omitted in books, which, in general, are accurately printed.

PUNCTUATION. 31

Remarks.

marks: but the argument is easily reducible to a narrow limit.

Have the parenthetical marks any time of pause annexed to them, as the four primary points have? Or

Are the parenthetical marks indices only to an oblique passage?

It appears to be more congenial with precision, that they should be considered in the latter sense; for, in the other case, they must be understood to convey different pauses in different situations.

The comma, semi-colon, colon, and period, are the indices to four distinct suspensions of the voice: the parenthetical characters direct to a modulation of the voice only; and, therefore, cannot be of advantage to good reading without the coalition of the former.

THUS

THUS far I have freely given my opinion upon the preceding rules, where I thought them deficient; and, in justice, I confess that all those, which I have not noticed, either meet my opinion fully, or contain such trifling blemishes as it would be deemed hypocritical to object to.

To produce rules sufficient for every purpose of composition, in all the possible variations of phrase and construction, would be tedious, difficult, and ineffectual; their number would destroy their utility. A nice acquaintance with punctuation is not, in my opinion, attainable by rules, as a knowledge of syntax may be acquired; but it must be procured by a kind of internal conviction, that the rules of grammar are never to be vio-

lated.

PUNCTUATION. 33

lated. What I mean, by never violating the rules of grammar, is, that a proper connexion be always preserved, in compound sentences, between the nominative case, however complex, and its verb; the verb and its objective case, however complex; the relative and its antecedent. And this is to be chiefly attained by a liberal and proper use of the comma.

I have before observed, that those, who are intimate with the proper use of the comma, will seldom be at a loss in placing the other points; and, the more I review this opinion, the more strongly do I feel convinced of its truth.

Few will hesitate in placing the period; for almost all know when the sense is complete; and, consequently, supposing them possessed of the comma's use and of the period's situation, the difficulty is reduced to the remaining two only. The colon never intervenes in grammatical construction,

tion, and the semi-colon but seldom; they are both chiefly useful in marking the degree of connexion between one sentence and another; and, in this, the connexion may be so variously felt, by different people, that two will seldom agree in the use of these points in the same passage.

Whenever I am doubtful if a sentence will admit a comma, I generally end my hesitation by inserting it, provided it do not militate against grammar; always preferring a rigid to a relaxed punctuation. The latter may present the sentence confused; but the former must preserve it distinct.

Punctuation should lead to the sense; the sense will guide to modulation and emphasis. When punctuation performs its office thus, it will point out likewise the grammatical construction; for the sense of a passage and its grammatical construction are inseparable. It follows that a knowledge of grammar is necessary

PUNCTUATION. 33

it certainly is; and I speak with perfect conviction, that any rules, militating against grammar, may be made specious, but they will ultimately be found defective. They may give a pleasing flow to words, but often strangely misguide the reader.

It certainly is among our desiderata, that just punctuation should be more generally cultivated. Did it form an attentive part of our education, a reference to books would teach the minutiae better than any rules. Impressed with this idea, I have selected the quotations that follow this chapter, and pointed them agreeably to my own feelings, being inclined to think, that grammarians will be more readily benefitted by this method than by the examples to particular rules. By attentively considering these quotations, I trust, it will be found, that, in a compound sentence, I have not inserted one point but what has a collateral dependence upon

36 ELEMENTS OF

some other, and naturally leads to the completion of the sense. Such is the proper office of the points; but, so many are the combinations of phrase, so various the degrees of connexion, and so different may be the grammatical construction, that detached examples of simple, or even of combined, sentences, can never teach that part of punctuation which may justly be termed the elegant and the classical.

In poetry, where subordinate sentences must be introduced so as to preserve the rhyme or measure, punctuation is more particularly serviceable to the sense. In prose, the habitual phrase of life, we can more readily perceive it; and the omission or insertion of a point does not long suspend the judgement from discovering the meaning of an author: but, in metrical compositions, where sentences are incomplete for, perhaps, four or five lines together, a proper use of the points agreeably facilitates our approximation to the sense;

sent
pro
with
our

W
duce
tre o
Brita
dista

a T
referen
nomin
eviden
imper

b T
mans;
be erat
c &
not con
nect th

sense; and we find pleasure in the perusal proportionate to the readiness and ease with which we discover the meaning of our author.

WHEN the Romans,^a attacked on all sides by the Barbarians,^b were reduced to the necessity of defending the centre of their empire, they abandoned Great Britain, as well as several other of their distant provinces. The island,^c thus

C 3 left

a This comma shews instantly, without any farther reference to the construction, that *Romans* is not the nominative case to *attacked*: and likewise renders evident that *attacked* is the participle, and not the imperfect tense.

b This is dependent upon the comma after *Romans*; for, if the former were omitted, the latter should be erased.

c & d Where the nominative case and its verb are not connected by juxtaposition, it is universal to connect them by commas.

38 ELEMENTS OF

left to itself,^d became a prey to the nations inhabiting the shores of the Baltic;^e who, having first destroyed the ancient inhabitants, and for a long time reciprocally annoyed each other, established several sovereignties in the southern part of the island, afterwards called England, which at length were united, under Egbert, into one kingdom.

DE LOLME.

A No old Greek epigrammatist,^a intending to shew the miseries that attend the last stage of man,^b imprecates,^c upon those who are so foolish as to wish for long life,^d the calamity of

e A semi-colon; the sentence being so long, that, with an inferior point, it would have been confused. This quotation consists of long periods, that are composed of subservient sentences, chiefly divided by commas.

a & b A sentence intervenes between a nominative case and its verb.

c & d A sentence intervenes between a verb and its objective case.

PUNCTUATION. 39

of continuing to grow old from century to century. He thought that no adventurous or foreign pain was requisite;^e that decrepitude itself was an epitome of whatever is dreadful;^f and nothing could be added, to the curse of age, but that it should be extended beyond its natural limits.

The most indifferent or negligent spectator can indeed scarcely retire, without heaviness of heart, from a view of the last scenes of the tragedy of life;^g in which, he finds those, who, in the former parts of

C 4

the

^e & ^f Semi-colons divide these sub-sentences into distinct parts. *He thought* is understood before each.

^g Distinctness and precision are two qualities essentially to be studied in punctuation: never to confuse, but always to elucidate, are maxims invariably to be pursued. For this reason, a semi-colon is admitted here, because here seems to be the greatest chasm in the connexion. The other sentences of this period are too closely interwoven to admit of more than a comma.

the drama, were distinguished by opposition of conduct, contrariety of designs, and dissimilitude of personal qualities, all involved in one common distress, and all struggling with affliction^h which they cannot hope to overcome.

The other miseries,ⁱ which way-lay our passage through the world, wisdom may escape, and fortitude may conquer. By caution and circumspection, we may steal along, with very little to obstruct or incommode us; by spirit and vigour, we may force a way, and reward the vexation
of

^h If it were the author's intent, in this passage, to say, "*all involved in one common distress*, (which they cannot hope to overcome,) *and all struggling with affliction which they cannot hope to overcome*," then a comma after *affliction* would be necessary, to prevent the relative from connecting more with *affliction* than with *distress*.

ⁱ *The other miseries* is the objective case to the verbs *escape* and *conquer*, and is therefore guided to them, from intervening matter, by commas.

PUNCTUATION. 41

of contest by the pleasures of victory. But a time must come, when our policy and bravery shall be equally useless; when we shall all sink into helplessness and sadness,^k without any power of receiving solace from the pleasures that have formerly delighted us, or any prospect of emerging into a second possession of the blessings that we have lost.

The industry of man has indeed not been wanting in endeavours,^l to procure comforts for these hours of dejection and melancholy, and to gild the dreadful gloom with artificial light. The most usual support of

^k All that follows this is connected with, and serves to extend the sense of, *when we shall all sink into helplessness and sadness*; but, did it connect with *when our policy and bravery shall be equally useless*, only a comma after *useless* could be admitted.

^l The two sentences which follow this, and which are introduced by the infinitive moods, *to procure* and *to gild*, are dependent equally upon the substantive *endeavours*; and, therefore, a comma is here introduced, as in all similar cases, to shew the equality of connexion.

of old age is wealth: he, whose possessions are large^m and whose chests are full, imagines himself always fortified against invasions on his authority. If he has lost all other means of government, if his strength and his reason fail him, he can at last alter his will; and, therefore, allⁿ that have hopes^o must likewise have fears, and he may still continue to give laws to such as have not ceased to regard their own interest.

This is indeed too frequently the citadel of the dotard, the last fortress to which
age.

^m If a comma were admitted in this place it would rather tend to confuse, by making two sentences of one that is not too long. It might not be indefensible; but an attention ought to be paid to the keeping of every sentence distinct; and, as it at present stands, the commas after *he* and *full* lead directly from the nominative case to the verb.

ⁿ & ^o Commas might be admitted here, without militating against grammar; but it is unnecessary to multiply points where the sense of a passage is evident.

age retires, and in which he makes the stand against the upstart race that seizes his domains,^p disputes his commands,^q and cancels his prescriptions. But here, though there may be safety, there is no pleasure; and what remains is but a proof that more was once possessed.

Nothing seems to have been more universally dreaded by the ancients than *orbity*,^r or want of children; and, indeed, to a man who has survived all the companions of his youth, all who have participated his pleasures and his cares, have been engaged in the same events, and filled their minds with the same conceptions,

p & q Three or more verbs, having the same nominative case, and immediately following one another, are separated by commas.

r *Want of children* is explanatory of *orbity*, therefore a comma is inserted; for two substantives, connected by the disjunctive *or*, should have a comma between them, if the latter substantive be explanatory of the former.

tions, this full-peopled world is a dismal solitude. He stands forlorn and silent, neglected^s or insulted, in the midst of multitudes, animated with hopes which he cannot share, and employed in business which he is no longer able to forward^t or retard; nor can he find any, to whom his life or his death are of importance, unless he has secured some domestic gratifications, some tender employments, and endeared himself to some, whose interest and gratitude may unite them to him.

So different are the colours of life, as we look forward to the future, or backward to the past;^u and so different the
opinions.

^s *Insulted*, not being explanatory of *neglected*, a comma is unnecessary..

^t These verbs are in the same situation, *retard* not explaining *forward*.

^u & ^v The reason for semi-colons here arises from that principle of perspicuity which is the essence of punctuation. Had commas only been used, there would have

PUNCTUATION. 45

opinions and sentiments which this contrariety of appearance naturally produces ; that the conversation of the old and young ends, generally, with contempt or pity on either side. To a young man, entering the world with fulness of hope and ardour of pursuit, nothing is so unpleasing as the cold caution, the faint expectations, the scrupulous diffidence, which experience and disappointments certainly infuse : and the old man wonders, in his turn, that the world never can grow wiser ; that neither precepts nor testimonies can cure boys of their credulity and sufficiency ; and that not one can be convinced that snares are laid

have been no distinction between the connexion of the parts of one sentence, and the connexion between two sentences. Whenever a cause is declared it should be directed to its consequence by even points ; thus, *that the conversation, &c.* is the consequence to the two preceding sentences, and the equality of points renders it evident that it has an equal dependence upon both.

laid for him, till he finds himself entangled.

Thus, one generation is always the scorn and wonder of the other; and the notions of the old and young are like liquors of different gravity and texture, which never can unite. The spirits of youth, sublimed by health and volatilized by passion, soon leave behind them the phlegmatic sediment of wariness and deliberation, and burst out in temerity and enterprize. The tenderness, therefore, which nature infuses, and which long habits of beneficence confirm, is necessary to reconcile such opposition; and an old man must be a father,^w to bear, with patience,

^w Wherever the expression is such as would be translated into Latin by a preposition and a gerundial adjective, a comma must always precede; for that expression is rendered into English, *in order to*. In this place, *to bear* means *in order to bear*; and this is a distinction between the two ways in which the infinitive mood may be used,

PUNCTUATION. 47

tience, those follies and absurdities, which he will perpetually imagine himself to find in the schemes and expectations, the pleasures and the sorrows,* of those who have not yet been hardened by time, and chilled by frustration.

Yet it may be doubted, whether the pleasure of seeing children ripening into strength be not over-balanced, by the pain of seeing some fall in the blossom, and others blasted in their growth; some shaken down by storms, some tainted with cankers, and some shrivelled in the shade; and whether he, that extends his care beyond himself, does not multiply his anxieties more than his pleasures, and weary himself, to no purpose, by superintending what he cannot regulate.

But, though age be, to every order of human beings, sufficiently terrible, it is
parti-

x Substantives immediately following one another, in the same case, and joined in pairs by the conjunction *and*, are separated, in pairs, by commas.

particularly to be dreaded by fine ladies, who have had no other end or ambition than to fill up the day and the night with dress, diversions, and flattery; and who, having made no acquaintance with knowledge or with business,^z have constantly caught all their ideas from the current prattle of the hour, and been indebted, for all their happiness, to compliments and treats. With these ladies, age begins early, and, very often, lasts long; it begins, ^{aa}when their beauty fades, when their mirth loses its sprightliness, and their motion its ease. From that time, all
which

y. & z A noun or pronoun in what is called the case absolute, and the participle, &c. with which it is connected, should be separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma; and if it occur, as here, in the middle of a sentence, it requires a comma before and after it. The antecedent to *who* (*fine ladies*) is understood to precede the participle *having*.

aa A comma after *it begins*, to shew it connects not more with *when their beauty fades*, than with *when their mirth loses*, &c.

PUNCTUATION. 49

which gave them joy vanishes from about them; they hear the praises bestowed on others, which used to swell their bosoms with exultation; they visit the seats of felicity, and endeavour to continue the habit of being delighted. But pleasure is only received when we believe that we give it in return: neglect and petulance inform them that their power and their value are past; and what then remains, but a tedious and comfortless uniformity of time, without any motion of the heart or exercise of the reason?

Yet, however age may discourage us, by its appearance, from considering it in prospect, we shall all, by degrees, certainly be old; and, therefore, we ought to inquire what provision can be made against that time of distress, what happiness can be stored up against the winter of life, and how we may pass our latter years with serenity and cheerfulness.

D

If

If it has been found, by the experience of mankind, that not even the best seasons of life are able to supply sufficient gratifications, without anticipating uncertain felicities, it cannot surely be supposed, that old age, worn with labours, harrassed with anxieties, and tortured with diseases, should have any gladness of its own, or feel any satisfaction from the contemplation of the present. All the comfort that can now be expected must be recalled from the past, or borrowed from the future: the past is very soon exhausted; all the events or actions, of which the memory can afford pleasure, are quickly recollected; and the future lies beyond the grave, where it can be reached only by virtue and devotion.

Piety is the only proper and adequate relief of decaying man. He that grows old without religious hopes, as he declines into imbecility, and feels pains and sorrows incessantly crowding upon him, falls into a gulph of bottomless misery; in
which

PUNCTUATION. 51

which every reflection must plunge him deeper, and where he finds only new gradations of anguish and precipices of horror.

N^o. 69, RAMBLER.

INVASIONS from abroad, insurrections at home, even private murders and poisonings, were apprehended. To deny the reality of the plot was to be an accomplice; to hesitate was criminal: royalist,^a republican, churchman, sectary, courtier,
D 2
patriot,

^a In the edition of Hume, 1782, I find this passage pointed thus: "*royalist, republican; churchman, sectary; courtier, patriot; all parties concurred in the delusion.*" This method of punctuation undoubtedly marks the antitheses, by separating them with semi-colons, but it leads from grammatical construction; for *royalist, republican, churchman, sectary, courtier, patriot, all parties*, are the nominative cases to the verb *concurred*, and should be equally connected with it; whereas, in Hume, *all parties* appears the only nominative case to the verb, by being closely attached; and *royalist, republican, churchman, sectary, courtier, patriot*, have no verb to connect with.

patriot, all parties, concurred in the delusion.

HUME'S ENG. HIST. vol. viii. p. 74.

“ I HAVE always preferred cheerfulness to mirth: the latter I consider as an act,^a the former as a habit, of the mind.

^b Mirth is short and transient; cheerfulness fixed and permanent. Those are often raised into the greatest transports of mirth, who are subject to the greatest depressions of melancholy: on the contrary, ^c cheerfulness, though it does not give the

^a The commas, after *act* and *habit*, shew these words to belong equally to *of the mind*; and preclude the necessity of repeating *of the mind* after each.

^b *Mirth is short and transient*. The sense here is complete; but the latter sentence, *cheerfulness fixed and permanent*, is connected with it, in grammatical construction, by having the verb *is* understood: therefore no stronger point than a semi-colon can be admitted.

^c A comma after *cheerfulness*, because the succeeding words intervene between that and its verb, *prevents*, and form no part of the nominative case.

PUNCTUATION. 53

the mind such an exquisite gladness, prevents us from falling into any depths of sorrow. Mirth is like a flash of lightning, that breaks through a gloom of clouds, and glitters for a moment; cheerfulness keeps up a kind of day-light in the mind, and fills it with a steady and perpetual serenity."

SPECTATOR.

"AS a moderate share of resentment is useful in its effects, so it is innocent in itself; nay, often, commendable. The virtue of mildness is no less remote from insensibility, ^a on the one hand, than from fury, ^b on the other. It implies, that

D 3 we

a & b *On the one hand, and on the other,* are merely explanatory; for which reason they are separated by commas, the sense being fully complete without these words *.

* Commas here supply the place of little parentheses, if I may be allowed the expression; and parentheses should never be used where commas are sufficient, to prevent confusion in the mind of the reader.—*This note is an observation of Mr. Adams, who is mentioned in page 9.*

we are angry only upon proper occasions, and in a due degree; ^c that we are never transported beyond the bounds of decency, or indulge a deep and lasting resentment; ^d that we do not follow, ^e but lead, ^f our passion, governing it as our servant, not submitting ourselves to it as our master. Under these regulations it is certainly excusable, when moved only by private wrongs; and, being excited by the injuries which others suffer, it bespeaks a generous mind; and deserves commendation.

c & d No greater point is admissible, because *It implies* is understood in both these places; and no less point would be proper, because the sentences, which these semi-colons separate, are compound; and would have been confused by so short a point as a comma.

e & f These commas are dependent upon each other; and one alone taken away would injure the grammatical construction; for *follow* and *lead* belong alike to the objective case, *our passion*. The commas prevent the needless circumlocution, *that we do not follow our passion, but lead our passion*.

PUNCTUATION. 55

mendation. Shall a good man feel no indignation against injustice and barbarity? & not even when he is witness to shocking instances of them?^h i When he sees a friend basely and cruelly treated; when he observes

‘Th’ oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes;’

shall he still enjoy himself in perfect tranquillity^k? Will it be a crime, if he conceives the least resentment? Will it not be rather somewhat criminal, if he is destitute of it? In such cases, we are commonly so far from being ashamed of

D 4 our

g The question seems to be suspended, and continued as if by an after-thought: and does not appear wholly to conclude till h. A semi-colon might be placed after *barbarity*, without impropriety; for the note of interrogation there does not admit a longer pause.

i & k. One question only is contained between & k, and it consists of two suppositions preparative to the interrogation.

56 ELEMENTS OF

our anger, ¹ as of something mean, that we are proud of it and confess it openly, ^m as what we count laudable and meritorious."

HOLLAND.

"DEAR Sensibility! ^a Source inexhausted of all that's precious in our joys or costly in our sorrows! ^b Thou chainest the martyr down upon his bed of straw; and it is thou who liftest him up to heaven. Eternal fountain of our feelings! it is here I trace thee, and this is thy divinity that stirs within me; not that,

l & m These sentences are perfectly of one nature; they may be erased, and the passage would still preserve a meaning; but these carry it onward to a more extended sense.

a & b These are sentences of invocation, wherein *sensibility* is personified, and addressed as something *admirable*: a note of admiration, therefore, finds its proper place here, and points out a zealous veneration.

PUNCTUATION. 57

that,^c in some sad and sickening moments,^d “my soul shrinks back upon herself, and startles at destruction;”^e (mere pomp of words!)^f but that I feel some generous joys and generous cares beyond myself. All comes from thee, great & great Sensorium of the world, which vibrates, if a hair of our head

e & d *In some sad and sickening moments*, is a sentence introduced, and dividing another, not deemed sufficiently comprehensive without it. *Not that* is immediately connected in grammatical construction with *my soul shrinks back upon herself*, and the intervening sentence is consequently inclosed with commas.

e & f The parenthetical marks are evidently proper, because they inclose a sentence different from the context, which may be omitted without subtracting from the plenitude of the sense; and the note of admiration is introduced to mark a sudden expressive feeling of the mind, somewhat bordering upon irony.

g For the omission of a comma, see “Remarks upon the Essay on Punctuation,” page 9.

head but fall upon the ground, in the remotest desert of thy creation." STERNE.

HEBREWS, XIII. 18.²

—*For we trust we have a good conscience.*

TRUST! trust we have a good conscience! Surely, if there is any thing in this life which a man may depend upon, and to the knowledge of which he is capable

a I have chosen this sermon of Sterne's, as much for the beauty of its reasoning, as for its serving to shew, in a forcible manner, the power of points. It has long been a custom, which would have been "*more honoured in the breach than the observance,*" to substitute a dash (—) in many places where points would have as full an effect. This needless substitution has, perhaps, contributed something to the obscurity in which punctuation and Sterne have been equally involved; for I know no other author, whose works have been so terribly be-dashed, or who has been generally considered more unintelligible. The abolition of these sometimes unnecessary marks, I hope, will bring Sterne down to the common scale of reason; his faint and masterly touches will, I trust, be not less felt when deprived of such needless trapping.

pable of arriving^b upon the most indisputable evidence, it must be this very thing, *whether he has a good conscience or not.* *

If a man thinks at all, he cannot well be a stranger to the true state of this account: he must be privy to his own thoughts and desires; he must remember his past pursuits, and know certainly the true springs and motives, which, in general, have governed the actions of his life.

In other matters we may be deceived by false appearances; and, as the wise man complains, *hardly do we guess aright at the things that are upon the earth, and* with

b If the following words, *upon the most indisputable evidence*, had connected with *if there is any thing in this life which a man may depend upon*, a comma must have been inserted at b; but, as they connect only with the expression which immediately precedes them, the comma is, of course, omitted.

* In all the editions of Sterne this word is printed *no*. I have here taken the liberty to correct it, the expression not being grammatical, and the correction so easily made, without the necessity of altering the form of the sentence.

with labour do we find the things that are before us : but, here, the mind has all the evidence and facts within herself;^c is conscious of the web she has wove;^d knows its texture and fineness, and the exact share which every passion has had, in working upon the several designs which virtue or vice has planned before her.

Now, as conscience is nothing else but the knowledge which the mind has, within herself, of this ; and the judgement, either of approbation or censure, which it unavoidably makes upon the successive actions of our lives ; it is plain, you will say, from the very terms of the proposition, whenever this inward testimony goes against a man, and he stands self-accused, that

c & d The nominative case to these verbs, *is* and *knows*, is *the mind*, which occurs in the preceding sentence, and is here understood before them. Semicolons are admitted, because, the last sentence being long, they render distinct the grammatical construction and the meaning of the author.

PUNCTUATION. 61

that he must necessarily be a guilty man; and, on the contrary, when the report is favourable on his side, and his heart condemns him not, that it is not a matter of *trust*, as the apostle intimates, but a matter of *certainly* and *fact*, that the conscience is good, and that the man must be good also.

At first sight, this may seem to be a true state of the case: and I make no doubt, but the knowledge of right and wrong is so truly impressed upon the mind of man, that, did no such thing ever happen, as that the conscience of a man, by long habits of sin, might (as the Scripture assures us it may) insensibly become hard; and, like some tender parts of his body, by much stress and continual hard usage, lose, by degrees, that nice sense and perception with which God and nature endowed it: did this never happen; or was it certain that self-love could never hang the least bias upon the judgement,

ment; or that the little interests below could rise up and perplex the faculties of our upper regions, and encompass them about with clouds and thick darkness; could no such thing as favour and affection enter this sacred court; did WIT disdain to take a bribe in it, or was ashamed to shew its face, as an advocate for an unwarrantable enjoyment; or, lastly, were we assured that INTEREST stood always unconcerned whilst the cause was hearing, and that PASSION never got into the judgement-seat and pronounced sentence,^c in the stead of REASON, which is supposed always

e I will submit another manner of pointing this sentence, and shew how it will affect the sense:—*and that PASSION never got into the judgement-seat, and pronounced sentence instead of REASON.* As I have pointed it in the text, the comma after *sentence*, and the omission of it after *judgement-seat*, makes the connexion equal; and shew that *passion* not only usurps the judgement-seat, but also usurps the privilege of pronouncing sentence; both of which are the seat and privilege of *reason*.

PUNCTUATION. 63

always to preside and determine upon the case: was this truly so, as the objection must suppose, no doubt, then, the religious and moral state of a man would be exactly what he himself esteemed it, and the guilt or innocence of every man's life could be known, in general, by no better measure than the degrees of his own approbation and censure.

I own, in one case, whenever a man's conscience does accuse him, (as it seldom errs on that side,) that he is guilty; and, unless in melancholy and hypochondriac cases, we may safely pronounce upon it, that there is always sufficient ground for the accusation.

But the converse of the proposition will not hold true; namely, that, whenever there is guilt, the conscience must accuse; and, if it does not, that a man is therefore innocent. This is not fact; so that the common consolation,

tion,^f which some good christian or other is hourly administering to himself, *that, he thanks God, his mind does not misgive him, and that, consequently, he has a good conscience, because he has a quiet one,^g is fallacious; and,^h as current as the inference is, and as infallible as the rule appears at first sight,ⁱ yet, when you look nearer to it, and try the truth of this rule upon plain facts,^k you see it liable to so much error from a false application; the principle upon which it goes so often perverted; the whole force of it lost, and sometimes so vilely cast away;^l that it is
 pain-*

f & g The sentences which intervene form no part of the nominative case to the verb *is*, and they are therefore separated by commas.

h i & k The conjunction *and* connects with the conjunction *yet*; *yet* leads on to the pronoun *you*; all which is effected by commas.

l The sentence which follows this reference is a consequence of the three preceding sentences; and is therefore attached to them by points of equal power.

PUNCTUATION. 65

painful to produce the common examples from human life which confirm the account.

A man shall be vicious and utterly debauched in his principles; exceptionable in his conduct to the world; shall live shameless, in the open commission of a sin which no reason or pretence can justify; a sin, by which, contrary to all the workings of humanity, he shall ruin, for ever, the deluded partner of his guilt, rob her of her best dowry, and not only cover her own head with dishonour, but involve a whole virtuous family in shame and sorrow for her sake: surely, you will think, conscience must lead such a man a troublesome life; he can have no rest, night or day, from its reproaches. Alas! conscience had something else to do, all this time, than break in upon him: as Elijah reproached the god Baal, this domestic god was either talking or pursuing, or was

E

in

in a journey ; or, peradventure, he slept, and could not be awoke.

Perhaps HE was gone out, in company with HONOUR, to fight a duel ; to pay off some debt at play ; or dirty annuity,^m the bargain of his lust. Perhaps CONSCIENCE, all this time, was engaged at home, talking loud against petty larceny, and executing vengeance upon some such puny crimes as his fortune and rank in life secured him against all temptation of committing ; so that he lives as merrily, sleeps as soundly in his bed, and at last meets death as unconcernedly, perhaps much more so than a much better man.

Another

m Two nouns in apposition are separated by comma.

n As the text at present remains, there is no consequence to *so that he lives as merrily, sleeps as soundly in his bed, and at last meets death as unconcernedly*, because the proper connective word, *as*, is wanting. The construction should be totally altered and pointed thus ; *so that he lives as merrily, sleeps as soundly* in

PUNCTUATION. 67

Another is sordid, unmerciful ; a strait-hearted selfish wretch, incapable either of private friendship or public spirit. Take notice how he passes by the widow and orphan in their distress, and sees all the miseries incident to human life,° without a sigh or a prayer.

Shall not CONSCIENCE rise up and sting him on such occasions ? No: thank God, there is no occasion ; “ *I pay every man*

E 2

his

his bed, and at last meets death as unconcernedly, as (perhaps much more so than) a much better man. How necessary it is that sentences should be grammatically constructed, to be justly pointed, this may serve as an instance ; for, the comparison here not being conjoined by proper particles, it is impossible to supply their place with points.

o *Without a sigh or a prayer* is not only intended to connect with *and sees all the miseries incident to human life* ; but is likewise as much a part of the sentence preceding that, viz. *Take notice how he passes by the widow and orphan in their distress* ; and is therefore separated from both, as they are separated from each other, by a comma.

68 ELEMENTS OF

*" his own ; I have no fornication to answer
 " to my conscience ; no faithless vows or
 " promises to make up ; I have debauched no
 " man's wife or child ; thank God, I am not
 " as other men, adulterers, unjust, or even as
 " this libertine who stands before me."*

A third is crafty and designing in his nature. View his whole life : 'twas nothing but a cunning contexture of dark arts and unequitable subterfuges, basely to defeat the true intent of all laws, plain dealing, and the safe enjoyment of our several properties. You will see such a one, working out a frame of little designs upon the ignorance and perplexities of the poor and needy man ; shall raise a fortune upon the inexperience of a youth, on the unsuspecting temper of his friend, who would have trusted him with his life.

When old age comes on, and repentance calls him to look back upon this black account, and state it over again with his conscience, conscience looks into the

PUNCTUATION. 69

STATUTES AT LARGE;^p finds no express law broken by what he has done; perceives no penalty or forfeiture of goods and chattels incurred; sees no scourge waving over his head, or prison opening his gates upon him. What is there to fright his conscience? Conscience has got safely entrenched behind the letter of the law; sits there invulnerable; fortified with cases and reports so strongly, on all sides, that it is not preaching can dispossess it of its hold.

A fourth man shall want even this refuge; shall break through all this ceremony of flow chicane; scorns the doubtful workings of secret plots and cautious trains, to bring about his purpose. See the bare-faced villain; how he cheats, lies, perjures, robs, murders! Horrid!

E 3

But,

^p Semi-colons aptly divide sentences that have one common nominative case, when any of them contain two clauses. A distinction is thereby preserved, which a continuance of commas would destroy.

But, indeed, much better was not to be expected in the present case: the poor man was in the dark; his priest had got the keeping of his conscience; and all he would let him know of it was, that he must believe in the pope, go to mass, cross himself, tell his beads, be a good catholic, and that this, in all conscience, was enough to carry him to heaven. What! if he perjures? Why, he had a mental reservation in it. But, if he is so wicked and abandoned a wretch as you represent him, if he robs, if he stabs, will not conscience, on every such act, receive a wound itself? Aye; but the man has carried it to confession: the wound digests there, and will do well enough, and, in a short time, be quite healed up by absolution. O popery! what hast thou to answer for! when, not content with the too many natural and fatal ways, through which the heart of man is every day thus treacherous to itself above all things, thou hast wilfully

PUNCTUATION. 71

fully set open this wide gate of deceit before the face of this unwary traveller, too apt, God knows, to go astray of himself, and confidently speak peace to himself, when there is no peace!

Of this the common instances, which I have drawn out of life, are too notorious to require much evidence. If any man doubts the reality of them, or thinks it impossible for a man to be such a bubble to himself, I must refer him, a moment, to his own reflections, and will then venture to trust my appeal with his own heart.

Let him consider in how different a degree of detestation numbers of wicked actions stand *there*, though equally bad and vicious in their own natures. He will soon find that such of them, as strong inclination and custom have prompted him to commit, are generally dressed out and painted with all the false beauties which a soft and a flattering hand can give.

give them; and that the others, to which he feels no propensity, appear, at once, naked and deformed, surrounded with all the true circumstances of folly and dishonour.

When David surprised Saul sleeping in the cave, and cut off the skirt of his robe, we read,* his heart smote him for what he had done; but,^q in the matter of Uriah, where

* A remarkable expression or a short observation, in the form of a quotation, ought to be separated from the words which introduce and follow it. If the quotation be very short, or closely connected with the context, a comma will be sufficient.

q I cannot too frequently remark upon the necessity of attending to the connexion of beginning and continuative particles. In this place, *but* is a part of the last sentence in the period; viz. *his heart smote him not*; and is therefore separated from the matter which intervenes. In such cases, where a point is inserted after any words that do not make complete sense, a corresponding point will be found in some subsequent place, which will lead to the connexion. Where a nominative case is separated

PUNCTUATION. 73

where a faithful and gallant servant, whom he ought to have loved and honoured, fell, to make way for his lust, where conscience had so much greater reason to take the alarm, his heart smote him not. A whole year had almost passed, from the first commission of that crime to the time Nathan was sent to reprove him; and we read not once of the least sorrow or compunction of heart which he testified, during all that time, for what he had done.

Thus CONSCIENCE, this once able monitor, placed on high as a judge within us, and intended by our Maker as a just and equitable one too, by an unhappy train of causes and impediments, takes often such imperfect cognizance of what passes, does its office so negligently, sometimes so corruptly, that it is not to be
trusted

rated from its verb, the place of connexion is easily found; but, where a conjunction is insulated by three or four lines, it requires a stricter attention.

74 ELEMENTS OF

trusted alone; and, therefore, we find there is a necessity, an absolute necessity, of joining another principle with it, to aid, if not govern, its determinations.

So that,* if you would form a just judgement of what is of infinite importance to you not to be misled in; namely, in what degree of real merit you stand, either as an honest man, an useful citizen, a faithful subject to your king, or a good servant to your God; call in religion and morality; look what is written in the law of God. How readest thou? Consult calm reason and the unchangeable obligations

* I observed, in page 72, that, where a point is inserted after any words that do not make complete sense, a corresponding point will be found in some subsequent place, which will lead to the connexion. This will be the case, when sentences are grammatically constructed; but here the beginning particles, *so that*, do not correspond with any words after, and it becomes therefore impossible to connect them, by points, to any subsequent expression.

gations of justice and truth: what say they?

Let conscience determine the matter upon these reports; and then, if thy heart condemns thee not, which is the case the apostle supposes, the rule will be infallible: "*thou wilt have confidence towards God;*" that is, have just grounds to believe the judgement thou hast passed upon thyself is the judgement of God, and nothing else but an anticipation of that righteous sentence, which will be pronounced upon thee hereafter by that Being, to whom thou art finally to give an account of thy actions.

"*Blessed is the man;*" indeed, then, as the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus expresses it, "*who is not pricked with the multitude of his sins: blessed is the man whose heart hath not condemned him; whether he be rich or whether he be poor, if he have a good heart,*" (a heart thus guided and informed,) "*he shall at all*
times"

76 ELEMENTS OF

*"times rejoice in a cheerful countenance;
 "his mind shall tell him more than seven
 "watchmen that sit above, upon a tower
 "on high."* In the darkeſt doubts it ſhall
 conduct him ſafer than a thouſand ca-
 ſuiſts, and give the ſtate he lives in a bet-
 ter ſecurity for his behaviour than all the
 clauſes and reſtrictions, put together, which
 law-makers are forced to multiply : *forced*,
 I ſay, as things ſtand ; human laws not
 being a matter of original choice, but of
 pure neceſſity, brought in, to fence againſt
 the miſchievous effects of thoſe con-
 ſciences which are no law unto them-
 ſelves ; well intending, by the many pro-
 viſions made, that,^r in all ſuch corrupt
 and

^r This conjunction (*that*) is unneceſſary, and is
 only a burden upon the conſtruction ; indeed, it is
 abſolutely improper, being unconnected with any ſen-
 tence. The infinitive mood, *to ſupply their force*, de-
 pends upon the participle, *well intending* ; and the
 conjunction *that* is needleſſy introduced. I muſt
 take

and misguided cases, where principles and the checks of conscience will not make us upright, to supply their force; and, by the terrors of gaols and halters, oblige us to it.

To have the fear of God before our eyes, and, in our mutual dealings with each other, to govern our actions by the eternal measures of right and wrong; the first of these will comprehend the duties of religion, the second those of morality, which are so inseparably connected together, that you cannot divide these two tables, even in imagination, (though the attempt is often made in practice,) without breaking and mutually destroying them both.

I said

take this opportunity of observing that Sterne has paid less attention to grammar than to the exciting of our feelings; and of those he appears such a perfect master, that we lose, in the rapidity of reading, all idea of vicious syntax.

78 ELEMENTS OF

I said the attempt is often made; and so it is; there being nothing more common than to see a man, who has no sense at all of religion, and indeed has so much honesty as to pretend to none, who would take it as the bitterest affront, should you but hint at a suspicion of his moral character, or imagine that he was not conscientiously just and scrupulous to the uttermost mite.

When there is some appearance that it is so, though one is unwilling even to suspect the appearance of so amiable a virtue as moral honesty, yet, were we to look into the grounds of it in the present case,

s&t It may perhaps be needless to repeat the reason for omitting a comma at s; but I must not forget elucidation, to avoid tautology. Were a comma inserted, *to the uttermost mite* would relate only to *scrupulous*, whereas it alike relates to that and to *conscientiously just*. Commas at s&t might be used; but would not every eye and every ear feel offence at them?

PUNCTUATION. 79

case, I am persuaded we should find little reason to envy such an one the honour of his motive.

Let him declaim as pompously as he chooses upon the subject, it will be found to rest upon no better foundation than either his interest, his pride, his ease, or some such little and changeable passion as will give us but small dependence upon his actions in matters of greater stress.

I will illustrate this by an example.

I know the banker I deal with, or the physician I usually call in, to be neither of them men of much religion: I hear them make a jest of it every day, and treat all its sanctions with so much scorn as to put the matter past doubt. Well; notwithstanding this, I put my fortune into the hands of the one, and ^u (what is still dearer to

^u As no comma could be admitted here, if the parenthetical sentence were erased, and we were to read *and I trust*, &c. so it cannot be inserted while
the

to me) I trust my life to the honest skill of the other.

Now let me examine what is my reason for this great confidence. Why; in the first place, I believe there is no probability that either of them will employ the power I put into their hands to my disadvantage; I consider that honesty serves the purposes of this life; I know their success in the world depends upon the fairness of their characters: in a word, I am persuaded they cannot hurt me, without hurting themselves more.

But put it otherwise; namely, that interest lay, for once, on the other side; that a case should happen, wherein the one, without stain to his reputation, could

secrete

the parenthetical marks are used to include a sentence; for the parenthetical marks should be accompanied with every point which the sense would require, if the parenthesis were omitted, except where the included sentence is interrogative or exclamatory.

PUNCTUATION. 81

secrete my fortune, and leave me naked in the world ; or that the other could send me out of it, and enjoy an estate by my death, without dishonour to himself or his art : in this case, what hold have I of either of them ? Religion, the strongest of all motives, is out of the question : interest, the next most powerful motive in the world, is strongly against me. What have I left to cast into the opposite scale,^v to balance this temptation ? Alas ! I have nothing ; nothing, but what is lighter than a bubble ; I must lie at the mercy of HONOUR, or some such capricious principle. Strait security for two of my most valuable blessings, my property and my life !

As, therefore, we can have no dependance upon morality without religion, so,

F

on

^v This expression, *to balance*, bears exactly the same meaning as *in order to balance*, and is, therefore, as before observed, preceded by a comma.

on the other hand, there is nothing better to be expected from religion without morality. Nevertheless, 'tis no prodigy to see a man, whose real moral character stands very low, who yet entertains the highest notion of himself, in the light of a religious man.

He shall not only be covetous, revengeful, implacable, but even wanting in points of common honesty; yet, inasmuch as he talks aloud against the infidelity of the age, is zealous for some points of religion, goes twice a-day to church, attends the sacrament, and amuses himself with a few instrumental parts of religion, shall cheat his conscience into a judgement, that, for this, he is a religious man, and has discharged truly his duty to God; and

w It would greatly elucidate this passage if the nominative case, *he*, were repeated. Is it not going too far back, for a nominative case, to the first word of this paragraph, which is only connected with the verb by the slight conjunction *yet*?

and you will find that such a man, through force of this delusion, generally looks down with spiritual pride upon every other man, who has less affectation of piety, though, perhaps, ten times more moral honesty,* than himself.

This likewise is a sore evil under the sun; and, I believe, there is no one mistaken principle, which, for its time, has wrought more serious mischiefs. For a general proof of this, examine the history of the Romish church; see what scenes of cruelty, murders, rapines, bloodshed, have all been sanctified by a religion not strictly governed by morality.

In how many kingdoms of the world has the crusading sword of this misguided

F 2

faint-

* *Than himself* completes the comparison, which begun in two sentences preceding, viz. *who has less affectation of piety, and ten times more moral honesty;* that *than himself* is separated from the latter sentence, to shew that it connects equally to the former.

faint-errant spared neither age, or^y merit, or sex, or condition; and, as he fought under the banners of a religion which set him loose from justice and humanity, he shewed none, mercilessly trampled upon both, heard neither the cries of the unfortunate, nor pitied their distresses! ^z

If the testimony of past centuries in this matter is not sufficient, consider, at this instant, how the votaries of that religion are, every day, thinking to do service and honour to God, by actions which are a dishonour and a scandal to themselves.

To

y These disjunctive conjunctions should be *nor*, instead of *or*.

z This whole paragraph, though it commences with the appearance of an interrogation, seems to me only to *DEPLORE* in *how many kingdoms*, &c. such cruelties have happened. The note of admiration appears adapted to its meaning, rather than the note of interrogation.

PUNCTUATION. 85

To be convinced of this,^{aa} go with me, for a moment, into the prisons of the inquisition. Behold *religion*, with *mercy* and *justice* chained down under her feet, there sitting ghastly upon a black tribunal, propped up with racks and instruments of torment. Hark! hark! what a piteous groan! See the melancholy wretch who uttered it just brought forth,^{bb} to undergo the anguish of a mock trial, and endure the utmost pains that a studied system of cruelty has been able to invent. Behold this helpless victim delivered up to his tormentors, his body, so wasted with sorrow and confinement, you will see every nerve and muscle as it suffers.

Observe the last movement of that horrid engine; see what convulsions it has

F 3 thrown

^{aa} & ^{bb} These sentences are constructed in the same manner as that mentioned in note v, and demand a comma to precede and follow them. Indeed, all such sentences are situated as is the case absolute, which is ever included between two points,

thrown him into ! Consider the nature of the posture in which he now lies stretched ; what exquisite torture he endures by it ! 'Tis all nature can bear ! Good God !—see how it keeps his weary soul hanging upon his trembling lips, willing to take its leave, but not suffered to depart. Behold the unhappy wretch led back to his cell ; see him dragged out of it again, to meet the flames and the insults, in his last agonies, which this principle (this principle, *that there can be religion without mercy*) has prepared for him.

The surest way to try the merit of any disputed notion is to trace down the consequences such a notion has produced, and compare them with the spirit of Christianity : 'tis the short and decisive rule which our Saviour hath left us, for these and such-like cases, and it is worth a thousand arguments ;—*by their fruits ye shall know them.*

I will

PUNCTUATION. 87

I will add no further to the length of this sermon, than by two or three short and independent rules deducible from it.

First;^{cc} whenever a man talks loudly against religion, always suspect that it is not his reason, but his passions, which have got the better of his CREED. A bad life and a good belief are disagreeable and troublesome neighbours; and, where they separate, depend upon it, 'tis for no other cause but quietness' sake.

Secondly; when a man, thus represented, tells you, in any particular instance, that such a thing goes *against* his conscience, always believe he means exactly the same thing as when he tells you such a thing goes *against* his stomach, ^{dd}a present want of appetite being generally the true cause of both.

In a word; trust that man in nothing, who has not a conscience in every thing:

F 4. and,

^{cc} This should be the adverb, *firstly*.

^{dd} The case absolute.

and, in your own case, remember this plain distinction, a mistake* in which has ruined thousands, *that your conscience is*
not

* In the "Essay on Punctuation," p. 50, is this rule :

"When a PREPOSITION is followed by a RELATIVE PRONOUN, a comma is very properly placed before the preposition."

In confirmation of which are subjoined many examples, constructed generally as under :

"Make no friendship with any one, *on whose* veracity you cannot depend."

"It is barbarous to injure those, *from whom* we have received a kindness."

"He fears nobody, *of whom* nobody is afraid."

Ec. Ec. Ec.

When the former part of this work was printed, the error of this rule escaped my notice, or I should have inserted my objections in page 20 : however, a suitable opportunity is now offered, as the reference to this remark is an exception. The examples adduced, in the Essay on Punctuation, cannot be negatived ; but the rule should not be made general, from its adaptation to *one* peculiar construction of words ; for all the examples consist of two members, connected by
a pre-

PUNCTUATION. 89

not a law: no; God and reason made the law, and have placed conscience within you, to determine (not like an Asiatic cadi, according to the ebbs and flows of his own passions, but) like a British judge, in this land of liberty and good sense, who makes no new law, but faithfully declares that law which he knows already written.

STERNE.

a preposition. The propriety of the comma, in those instances, has perhaps contributed to strengthen the idea of the generality of the rule. But let us consider the expression in the text; *remember this plain distinction, a mistake in which has ruined thousands, that your conscience is not a law*. A comma, after *mistake*, would materially obstruct the sense, and introduce a needless pause; for *a mistake in which* is an expression that must be taken collectively, and not partially.

THE

THE quotations, which I have already made, afford, I conceive, nearly as many diversified instances of punctuation as can be expected from prosaic authors. The reader, who feels the justice of the points that have been introduced, will more easily comprehend the use of such points as may be used in the following poetic quotations. In Milton, whose work I think the most difficult to point, the collocation of words has such an infinite variety, that we shall find the general rules insufficient for the purpose; and the only use we can make of them is to reason from them analogously. I much fear that some of the sentences will, on a cursory examination, bear the appearance of pedantic punctuation; but, where words are combined in a rigid manner, that appearance is unavoidable; and the fault, if any, lies in the construction of the sentence, and not in the use of the points.

CANTO

PUNCTUATION. 91

C A N T O I.

WHAT dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,

I sing. This verse to Caryll, muse, is due;

This ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view:

Stight is the subject; but not so the praise, 5

If she inspire, and he approve, my lays.

Say what strange motive, goddess, could compel
A well-bred lord t' assault a gentle belle:

Oh! say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,

Could make a gentle belle reject a lord. 10

In tasks so bold can little men engage?

And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?

Sol, through white curtains, shot a tim'rous ray,
And op'd those eyes that must eclipse the day;

Now

Line 5] A semi-colon after *subject*, that the 6th line may connect only with *but not so the praise*.

Lines 8 & 10] In the editions of Pope's works I find notes of interrogation at the end of these lines; but the construction of these sentences is not interrogatory but imperative.

Line 13] A custom has obtained of printing the words *through* and *though* elliptically; thus, thro'—
tho'.

92 ELEMENTS OF

Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake, 1;
 And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake;
 Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,
 And the press'd watch return'd a silver sound:
 Belinda still her downy pillow press'd,
 Her guardian sylph prolong'd the balmy rest; 20
 'Twas he had summon'd, to her silent bed,
 The morning dream that hover'd o'er her head;
 A youth, more glitt'ring than a birth-night beau,
 (That ev'n in slumber caus'd her cheek to glow,)

Seem'd

tho'. Now, being words of one syllable, I cannot see the necessity of contracting them, as the ellipsis cannot make them more suitable to the measure of any verse.

Line 21] *He* is not the nominative case to *had*; but is the objective case to *was*. The passage, expressed at length, is thus; *It was he who had summoned, &c.* A comma is omitted after *he*, because no confusion arises from its omission, and as its insertion might have appeared too rigid, and perhaps have incurred the charge of pedantry.

Line 24] Would it not be better to print the contraction of *even* thus; *e'en*, instead of *ev'n*? We usually omit the *v* in *ever* and *over*, when those words

PUNCTUATION.

93

Seem'd to her ear his winning lips to lay, 25

And thus in whispers said, or seem'd to say:

“ Fairest of mortals, thou distinguish'd care
Of thousand bright inhabitants of air,
If e'er one vision touch thy infant thought;
Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught)

Of airy elves, by moonlight shadows seen,

The silver token and the circled green;

Or virgins visited, by angel pow'rs,

With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly flow'rs;

Hear and believe; thy own importance know; 35

Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.

Some secret truths, from learned pride conceal'd,

To maids alone and children are reveal'd:

What though no credit doubting wits may give,

The fair and innocent shall still believe. 40

Know,

words are reduced to one syllable, as in lines 29 and 44: then why not pursue analogy in this?

Line 39] *What though* is an expression which must be taken together, and it means *notwithstanding*. These words might not be unaptly joined by a hyphen; thus, *What-though*.—*Vide Dr. Johnson's Dictionary, voc. What.*

94 . ELEMENTS OF

Know, then, unnumber'd spirits round thee fly,
 The light militia of the lower sky;
 These, though unseen, are ever on the wing,
 Hang o'er the box, and hover round the ring.
 Think what an equipage thou hast in air, 45
 And view, with scorn, two pages and a chair.
 As now your own, our beings were of old,
 And once inclos'd in woman's beauteous mould;
 Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
 From earthly vehicles to these of air. 50
 Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,
 That all her vanities at once are dead;
 Succeeding vanities she still regards,
 And, though she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards;
 Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive, 55
 And love of ombre, after death survive;
 For,

Line 55] *When alive* refers to *Her joy in gilded chariots* and to *And love of ombre*; so that, by being equally separated from each, it connects with both. Had this expression been omitted, no point could have been used in these lines, 55 and 56; for, the verb being plural, *Her joy in gilded chariots* *And love of ombre* are the nominative cases to it; and two singular nouns demand a plural verb.

PUNCTUATION. 95

For, when the fair in all their pride expire,
 To their first elements their souls retire :
 The sprites of fiery termagants in flame
 Mount up, and take a salamander's name ; 60
 Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
 And sip, with nymphs, their elemental tea ;
 The graver prude sinks downward to a gnome,
 In search of mischief still on earth to roam ;
 The light coquettes in sylphs aloft repair, 65
 And sport and flutter in the fields of air.

Know further yet, whoever, fair and chaste,
 Rejects mankind is, by some sylph, embrac'd ;
 For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
 Assume what sexes and what shapes they please. 70
 What guards the purity of melting maids,
 In courtly balls and midnight masquerades,
 Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,
 The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,

When

Line 69] If the two last words of this line be pronounced rapidly with the first of the next, it varies the pause, (which is but too frequently, in poetry, confined to the end of a line,) and thereby produces an harmonious variety.

96 ELEMENTS OF

When kind occasion prompts their warm desires, 75
 When music softens, and when dancing fires?
 'Tis but their sylph, the wise celestials know,
 Though Honour is the word with men below.

Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
 For life predestin'd to the gnomes' embrace. 80

These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
 When offers are disdain'd and love deny'd :

Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
 While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,
 And garters, stars, and coronets, appear, 85

And, in soft sounds, *your grace* salutes their ear.

'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
 Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
 Teach infant cheeks a bidden blush to know,
 And little hearts to flutter at a beau. 90

Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
 The sylphs through mystic mazes guide their way ;

Through

Line 91] When two or three little particles begin
 a sentence, small attention is customarily paid to the
 separating of them from the words to which, by po-
 sition,

PUNCTUATION. 97

Through all the giddy circle they pursue,
 And old impertinence expel by new.
 What tender maid but must a victim fall 95
 To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
 When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,
 If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
 With varying vanities, from ev'ry part,
 They shift the moving toyshop of their heart;
 Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots
 strive, 100
 Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive:
 This erring mortals levity may call;
 Oh! blind to truth! the sylphs contrive it all.

G

Of

sition, they are attached, and to the conducting of them to any subsequent sentence, with which, by construction, they are connected. Thus, as this is printed in Pope's works, *Oft when the world imagine women stray* appears one sentence and no more; but, in fact, *Oft* belongs to the next line; for the sense of it, prosaically expressed, is this; *When the world imagine women stray, the sylphs oft guide their way through mystic mazes.*

98 ELEMENTS OF

Of these am I, who thy protection claim, 105
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I rang'd the chrystal wilds of air,
In the clear mirror of thy ruling star,
I saw, alas ! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend; 110
But heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warn'd by the sylph, oh ! pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can;
Beware of all ; but most beware of man."

He said ; when Shock, who thought she slept too
long, 115

Leap'd up, and wak'd his mistress with his tongue.
Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first open'd on a billet-doux :
Wounds, charms, and ardours, were no sooner read,
But all the vision vanish'd from thy head. 120

And now, unveil'd, the toilet stands display'd,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.

First,

Line 120] The first word of this line should be
Than, to complete the comparative description. *But*
is a vulgarism.

First,
With
A he
To th
Th' i
Trem
Unnur
The v
From
And d
This c
And a

Line
point o
verbs,
therefo
those p
render

Line
Line 69
bling ;
of pride
blingly.
more p

PUNCTUATION. 99

First, rob'd in white, the nymph intent adores,
 With head uncover'd, the cosmetic pow'rs:
 A heav'nly image in the glass appears;
 To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
 Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side
 Trembling, begins the sacred rites of pride.
 Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
 The various off'rings of the world appear;
 From each she nicely culls, with curious toil,
 And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
 This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
 And all Arabia breathes from yonder box;

G 2

The

Line 123] I conceive it will now be needless to point out where nominative cases connect with their verbs, or verbs with their objective cases, &c. I shall therefore, in future notes, endeavour to explain only those places which a new collocation of words may render singular.

Line 127] For the reason offered in the note upon *Line 69*, the comma is removed from *side to trembling*; and as, to connect with *begins the sacred rites of pride*, it should have been the adverb, *Tremblingly*. The participle, as it stands in the text, is more proper.

100 ELEMENTS OF

The tortoise here and elephant unite, 135
 Transform'd to combs, the speckled and the white;
 Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
 Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.
 Now awful beauty puts on all its arms!
 The fair each moment rises in her charms, 140
 Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
 And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
 Sees, by degrees, a purer blush arise,
 And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
 The busy sylphs surround their darling care, 145
 These set the head, and those divide the hair;
 Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
 And Betty's prais'd for labours not her own.

POPE'S RAPE OF THE LOCK.

THESE

THESE are thy blessings, INDUSTRY, rough
power,

Whom labour still attends, and sweat, and pain ;

Yet the kind source of every gentle art,

And all the soft civility of life.

Raiser of human kind, by nature cast, 5

Naked and helpless, out amid the woods

And wilds, to rude inclement elements ;

With various seeds of art deep in the mind

Implanted, and, profusely pour'd around,

Materials infinite ;—but idle all ! 10

Still, unexerted, in th' unconscious breast

Slept the lethargic powers ; corruption still,

Voracious, swallow'd what the liberal hand

Of bounty scatter'd o'er the savage year ;

And still the sad barbarian, roving, mix'd 15

With beasts of prey, or for his acorn-meal

G 3

Fought

Lines 11 & 13] Unexerted and voracious. — We must understand the participle being before these adjectives ; for the syntax requires they should be in the case absolute.

Fought the fierce tusky boar ; a shivering wretch !
 Aghast and comfortless, when the bleak north,
 With winter charg'd, let the mix'd tempest fly ;
 Hail, rain, and snow, and bitter-breathing frost ; 20
 Then to the shelter of the hut he fled,
 And the wild season, fordid, pin'd away :
 For home he had not. Home is the resort
 Of love, of joy, of peace, and plenty ; where,
 Supporting and supported, polish'd friends 25
 And dear relations mingle into bliss.

But

[Line 20] This line is in apposition to, and is intended to present a picture of, *the mix'd tempest*. Nouns in apposition, when accompanied with adjuncts, are separated by commas ; but how shall we do with sentences in apposition ? They require a stronger point than a comma ; and, if perspicuity be attended to, we should use a semi-colon, or make the sentence in apposition parenthetical. The peculiar style of Thomson, and the abundance of his epithets, occasions a frequent use of the comma ; and it is often necessary to call in the aid of parentheses and semi-colons, to preserve a distinction, and to prevent confusion from the too frequent occurrence of the same point.

PUNCTUATION. 103

But this the rugged savage never felt,
 Even desolate in crouds ; and thus his days
 Roll'd (heavy, dark, and unenjoy'd) along.
 A waste of time ! till INDUSTRY approach'd, 30
 And rous'd him from his miserable sloth ;
 His faculties unfolded ; pointed out
 Where lavish nature the directing hand
 Of art demanded ; shew'd him how to raise
 His feeble force by the mechanic powers, 35
 To dig the mineral from the vaulted earth,

G 4

On

Line 29] To omit the parenthetical marks, commas must be substituted. Four commas in this line, where the verb is separated from its adverb by three adjectives which require a comma after each, would unavoidably, I fear, be confusing ; and I think the parenthesis is of more advantage to a ready discovery of the construction.

Line 31] The semi-colons in this and the fifteen following lines are used to separate sentences, each of which has an appropriate verb and a general nominative case. Most of them contain two or more clauses, and semi-colons conveniently shew the completion of each sentence.

Line 34 to line 38] The infinitive moods between these lines, viz. *to raise, to dig, to turn*, are dependent ;

104 .ELEMENTS OF

On what to turn the piercing rage of fire,
 On what the torrent and the gather'd blast;
 Gave the tall ancient forest to his ax;
 Taught him to chip the wood and hew the stone, 40
 Till, by degrees, the finish'd fabric rose;
 Tore from his limbs the blood-polluted fur,
 And wrapt them in the woolly vestment warm,
 Or bright in glossy silk and flowing lawn;
 With wholesome viands fill'd his table; pour'd 45
 The generous glass around; inspir'd to wake
 The life-refining soul of decent wit:
 Nor stopp'd at barren bare necessity;
 But, still advancing bolder, led him on
 To pomp, to pleasure, elegance, and grace; 50
 And, breathing high ambition through his soul,
 Set science, wisdom, glory, in his view,
 And bade him be the *Lord* of all below.

Then

dent upon the verb *shew'd*; and therefore, with their
 adjuncts, form but one sentence, separated at the end
 by a semi-colon: Whatever point a sentence may
 require at the end of it, prints of inferior power
 should be used in the middle.

PUNCTUATION. 105

Then gathering men their natural powers combin'd
And form'd a *Public*, to the general good 55
Submitting, aiming, and conducting all.

40 For this the *patriot-council* met; the full,
The free, and fairly represented, *Whole*:

For this they plann'd the holy guardian laws,
Distinguish'd orders, animated arts, 60

And, with joint force *oppression* chaining, set
45 *Imperial Justice* at the helm; yet still

To them accountable; nor slavish dream'd
That toiling millions must resign their weal

And all the honey of their search, to such 65
As, for themselves alone, themselves have rais'd.

50 Hence every form of cultivated life,

In order set, protected, and inspir'd,

Into perfection wrought: uniting all,

Society grew numerous, high, polite, 70

And happy. Nurse of art, the city, rear'd,
In

Line 57] See the note upon line 20, this being exactly parallel to the instance there remarked on.

Line 68] This line is the case absolute.

Line 71] *The city* is in apposition to *nurse of art*.

In beauteous pride, her tower-encircled head ;
 And, stretching street on street, by thousands drew,
 From twining woody haunts, or the tough yew
 To bows strong straining, her aspiring sons. 75
 Then Commerce brought into the public walk
 The busy merchant ; the big warehouse built ;
 ,Rais'd the strong crane ; choak'd up the loaded street
 With foreign plenty ; and thy stream, O Thames,
 Large, gentle, deep, majestic, king of floods, 80
 Chose for his grand resort. On either hand,
 Like a long wintry forest, groves of masts
 Shot up their spires ; the bellying sheet between
 Possess'd the breezy void ; the sooty hulk
 Steer'd sluggish on ; the splendid barge along 85
 Row'd, regular, to harmony ; around,
 The boat, light-skimming, stretch'd its oary wings ;
 While deep the various voice of fervent toil
 From bank to bank increas'd ; whence, ribb'd with
 oak,

To

Line 86] Comma after *around*, to shew that it is not a preposition governing *The boat* ; for, had it been the preposition, it could not have been separated from the substantive it governed.

PUNCTUATION. 107

To bear the British thunder, black and bold, 90

The roaring vessel rush'd into the main.

Then too the pillar'd dome magnific heav'd

Its ample roof; and Luxury, within,

Pour'd out her glittering stores: the canvas smooth,

With glowing life protuberant, to the view 95

Embodied rose: the statue seem'd to breathe

And soften into flesh, beneath the touch

Of forming art, imagination-flush'd.

All is the gift of INDUSTRY; whate'er

Exalts, embellishes, and renders life 100

Delightful: penfive winter, cheer'd by him,

Sits at the social fire; and happy hears

Th' excluded tempest idly rave along:

His

Line 92] *Magnific*, I conceive, should be understood here adverbially. Such instances we shall find frequently, where adjectives, by sometimes a better adaptation to the measure, must be taken adverbially.—Such again is the expression, in line 102, *and happy hears*, &c. else *happy* must be considered in the case absolute, agreeing with *he*, understood; and it should then be included between commas. If taken adverbially, points are inadmissible,

108 ELEMENTS OF

His harden'd fingers deck the gaudy spring :
 Without him, summer were an arid waste ; 105
 Nor to th' autumnal months could thus transmit
 Those full, mature, immeasurable, stores,
 That, waving round, recal my wandering song.

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

WITH thee, serene PHILOSOPHY, with thee
 And thy bright garland, let me crown my song !
 Effusive source of evidence and truth !
 A lustre shedding o'er th' ennobled mind,
 Stronger than summer-noon, and pure as that, 5
 Whose mild vibrations sooth the parted soul,
 New to the dawning of celestial day.
 Hence, through her nourish'd pow'rs, enlarg'd by
 thee,
 She springs aloft with elevated pride,
 Above the tangling mafs of low desires 10
 That bind the fluttering croud ; and, angel-wing'd,
 The heights of science and of virtue gains,

Where

PUNCTUATION. 109

Where all is calm and clear ; with Nature round,
 Or in the starry regions or th' abyfs,
 To Reason's and to Fancy's eye display'd ; 15
 The *first* up-tracing, from the dreary void,
 The chain of causes and effects, to HIM,
 The world-producing ESSENCE, who alone
 Possesses being ; while the *last* receives
 The whole magnificence of heav'n and earth, 20
 And every beauty, delicate or bold,
 Obvious or more remote, with livelier sense,
 Diffusive, painted on the rapid mind.

Tutor'd by thee, hence POETRY exalts
 Her voice to ages ; and informs the page 25
 With music, image, sentiment, and thought,
 Never to die ; the treasure of mankind ;
 Their highest honour ; and their truest joy !

Without

Line 13] The order is this ; *with Nature displayed round to Reason's and to Fancy's eye, or [whether] in the starry regions or in the abyfs.*

Lines 16 & 19] *First* and *last* refer to Reason and Fancy.

Line 27] *The treasure of mankind, their highest honour, and their truest joy,* are sentences in apposition

to

110 ELEMENTS OF

Without thee, what were unenlighten'd man?
 A savage; roaming through the woods and wilds 30
 In quest of prey, and, with th' unfashion'd fur
 Rough-clad, devoid of every finer art
 And elegance of life. Nor happiness
 Domestic, mix'd of tenderness and care,
 Nor moral excellence, nor social bliss, 35
 Nor guardian law, were his; nor various skill,
 To turn the furrow or to guide the tool
 Mechanic; nor the heav'n-conducted prow
 Of navigation bold, that, fearless, braves
 The burning line or dares the wintry pole; 40
 Mother severe of infinite delights!

Nothing,

to music, image, sentiment, and thought, never to die;
 and, as there were many commas in the preceding
 sentence, it was necessary, for distinction, that semi-
 colons should separate them. In all cases where one
 of the sentences in apposition contains two or three
 commas, I would recommend the using of semi-
 colons to separate them; for, undoubtedly, such sen-
 tences do not need so close a connexion, as the parts
 of one sentence do to each other.

PUNCTUATION. 111

Nothing, save rapine, indolence, and guile,
 And woes on woes, a still revolving train,
 Whose horrid circle had made human life
 Than non-existence worse :—but, taught by thee, 45
 Ours are the plans of policy and peace,
 To live like brothers, and, conjunctive all,
 Embellish life. While thus laborious crowds
 Ply the tough oar, PHILOSOPHY directs
 The ruling helm ; or, like the liberal breath 50
 Of potent heaven, invisible, the sail
 Swells out, and bears th' inferior world along.

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

Line 42] We must here understand *were his* to follow *Nothing* ; and *Mother severe of infinite delights* to be an address to Philosophy. After recounting the wants of man, unaided by philosophy, they are more summarily expressed by repeating the address ; *Mother severe of infinite delights ! nothing were his, save rapine, &c.*

Line 47] *To live*, i. e. *in order to live.*

Line 51] *Invisible* does not refer to *heaven*, but to the *liberal breath of heaven* ; and, therefore, not agreeing with *heaven*, as an adjective with its substantive, but being in apposition to the whole sentence, it is separated by a comma.

OF

* OF Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
 Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
 Brought death into the world and all our woe,
 With loss of Eden, till one greater man
 Restore us and regain the blissful seat,
 Sing, heav'nly muse, that, on the secret top
 Of Oreb or of Sinai, didst inspire

That

* I would recommend it to the critical reader to make a comparison between the pointing here practised, and the pointing of the best editions of Milton. He will perceive, then, wherein the difference lies, and may better determine which methods are best adapted to preserve the sense of our author, and to facilitate a discovery of his meaning.

Line 7] In page 5, of this work, I have given my reasons for using a comma between two substantives connected by the disjunctive *or*, when the latter is explanatory; and for rejecting it when the latter is not so. Here is an instance of that rule's utility; for the comma being omitted after *Oreb* shews that *Sinai* and *Oreb* were two places, and not two names of one place. They were parts of one mountain, but distinguished by separate names.

PUNCTUATION. 113

That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed,
 In the beginning, how the heav'ns and earth
 Rose out of chaos : or, if Sion hill 10
 Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd
 Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
 Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
 That, with no middle flight, intends to soar 15
 Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues
 Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
 And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer,
 Before all temples, th' upright heart and pure,
 Instruct me, for thou know'st : thou, from the first,
 Wast present ; and, with mighty wings outspread, 20
 Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyfs,

H

And

Line 20] I have made *dove-like* to connect with
sat'st brooding on the vast abyfs, as it completes the
 figure. Had it been thus pointed,

and with mighty wings, outspread
 Dove-like, sat'st brooding on the vast abyfs,
 the figure would have been feeble and inapplicable ;
 for *wings outspread like a dove* has not so peculiar an
 adaptation as *sat'st brooding like a dove*.

114 ELEMENTS OF

And mad'st it pregnant. What in me is dark
 Illumine; what is low raise and support;
 That, to the height of this great argument,
 I may assert eternal Providence,
 And justify the ways of God to man.

Say, first, (for heav'n hides nothing from thy view,
 Nor the deep tract of hell,) say, first, what cause
 Mov'd our grand parents, in that happy state
 Favour'd of heaven so highly, to fall off
 From their Creator, and transgress his will
 For one restraint, lords of the world besides.
 Who first seduc'd them to that foul revolt?

Line 22] *What in me is dark* is the complex ob-
 jective case to *illumine*; therefore inseparable by
 point, although a little suspense in reading may be
 necessary, provided it be accompanied with that
 kind of modulation which may declare the sense in-
 complete.—*What is low raise and support* is exactly
 similar.

Line 32] The sentence which ends here is not in-
 terrogative, as erroneously marked in the editions of
 Milton. It is exactly of the same nature as to say
Tell me where you are going, &c. &c.—The interro-
 gation does not commence till line 33.

PUNCTUATION. 115

The serpent: he it was, whose guile,
 Stirr'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd 35
 The mother of mankind, what time his pride
 Had cast him out from heav'n, with all his host
 Of rebel angels, by whose aid, aspiring
 To set himself in glory 'bove his peers,
 He trusted to have equall'd the Most High, 40
 If he oppos'd; and, with ambitious aim

H 2

Against

Line 38] Comma after *aid*, in order to compact
aspiring to set himself in glory 'bove his peers into one
 sentence, and to lead by *whose aid* to *He trusted to*
have equall'd the Most High; for so I conceive the
 construction to be.

Line 41] In Dr. Newton's edition no point is in-
 serted from the semi-colon at *oppos'd* to the period at
attempt; but the order of the words appears to me as
under; and rais'd impious war and battle proud in
heaven, with vain attempt, with ambitious aim against
the throne and monarchy of God. If this be the sense,
 the above points are necessary; but it may be useful
 to bring into notice how this meaning might be al-
 tered by transposing the points thus:

——and, with ambitious aim,
 Against the throne and monarchy of God

Rais'd

116 ELEMENTS OF

Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Rais'd impious war in heav'n and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power

Hurl'd

Rais'd impious war in heav'n and battle proud,
With vain attempt.

The latter meaning is this ; *and, with ambitious aim, rais'd impious war in heav'n and battle proud against the throne and monarchy of God, with vain attempt.* Much advantage would accrue to those who wish to understand punctuation, if they occasionally transposed the points, and observed the effects it produced upon the syntax, connexion, and meaning. Such exercises would confirm the rules preferably to all examples.

Line 44] Let us vary the points, and observe how the meaning of these sentences will alter :

——Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, &c.

The order of the words then becomes, *The Almighty Power hurl'd him headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky, down to bottomless perdition, with hideous ruin and combustion.* Now, exclusively of these latter points
confining

PUNCTUATION. 117

Hurl'd headlong, flaming from th' ethereal sky 45
 With hideous ruin and combustion, down
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
 In adamant chain and penal fire,
 Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
 Nine times the space that measures day and night 50
 To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
 Lay vanquish'd, rolling in the fiery gulf,
 Confounded though immortal; but his doom
 Reserv'd him for more wrath: for now the thought
 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain 55

H 3

Tor-

confining the voice suspended, too uniformly, at the end of a line, which is inconsistent with the elegant variety of Milton's versification, I conceive, that a more beautiful meaning is produced by making one sentence of

——flaming from th' ethereal sky

With hideous ruin and combustion,——

which makes the following order; *The Almighty Power hurl'd him headlong down to bottomless perdition, flaming from th' ethereal sky with hideous ruin and combustion.*

118 ELEMENTS OF

Torments him ; round he throws his baleful eyes,
 That witness'd huge affliction and dismay,
 Mix'd with obdurate pride and stedfast hate ;
 At once, as far as angels ken, he views
 The dismal situation waste and wild ; 60
 A dungeon horrible on all sides round,
 As one great furnace, flam'd ; yet from those flames
 No light, but rather darkness visible
 Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,
 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades ; where peace 65
 And

Line 56] Here again is another instance of the effect of transposition. Observe this passage with the following points :

—round he throws his baleful eyes,
 That witness'd huge affliction and dismay,
 Mix'd with obdurate pride and stedfast hate,
 At once, as far as angels ken ; he views
 The dismal situation waste and wild ;
 A dungeon horrible, &c.

The meaning of it then becomes thus altered ; *At once, as far as angels ken he throws around his baleful eyes, that witness'd huge affliction and dismay, mix'd with obdurate pride and stedfast hate ; he [then] views the dismal situation waste and wild, &c.*

PUNCTUATION. 119

And rest can never dwell, hope never comes,
 That comes to all ; but torture without end
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsum'd ;
 Such place eternal justice had prepar'd 70
 For those rebellious, here their pris'n ordain'd
 In utter darkness, and their portion set
 As far remov'd from God and light of heav'n
 As from the centre thrice to th' utmost pole :
 Oh ! how unlike the place from whence they fell ! 75
 There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelm'd
 With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
 He soon discerns ; and, wett'ring by his side,
 One next himself in pow'r and next in crime,
 Long after known in Palestine, and nam'd 80
 Beëlzebub : to whom th' arch-enemy,

H 4

And

Line 66] We must understand where before hope never comes ; for the meaning is, where hope, that comes to all, never comes.

Line 76] This line is the objective case to the verb discerns, in line 78.

120 ELEMENTS OF

And thence in heav'n call'd Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began.

Line 82] A comma inserted after *words* would connect *with bold words* to *thus began*, and make the following meaning; *to whom th' arch-enemy thus began with bold words*; but does not *breaking the horrid silence with bold words* better connect, and make a greater variety of pause?



CRITICAL

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON

M I L T O N.

IT may not only be a matter of curiosity, but of use, to observe those passages in our English Classics, the punctuation of which has been honoured with the commentaries of eminent critics. A selection of this kind may possibly concentrate a variety of uncommon and difficult cases; and, probably, a greater variety than can be met with in general reading: it may likewise possess the advantage of shewing the power of points, and

and the feebleness of passages that want them. The following instances, which I have culled, *literatim*, from Dr. Newton's edition of Milton, I conceive in some degree adequate to that end; and, to the opinion of the various commentators, I have appended my own; thinking that my observations may sometimes elucidate, and hoping that they never obscure.

PARADISE LOST. Book I. Line 722.

——“ Th' ascending pile

Stood fix'd her stately highth, and strait the doors
Opening their brazen folds discover wide
Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
And level pavement.——

Within.] An adverb here and not a preposition: and therefore Milton puts a comma after it, that it may not be joined in construction with *her ample spaces*. So Virgil, *Æn.* II. 483.

Apparet domus intus, & atria longa patefcunt.”

This

This remark upon the adverbial use of *within* is critically just; and I conceive that it likewise operates here rather parenthetically, and that it will bear a comma to precede as well as follow it. I propose the following pointing:

—Th' ascending pile
 Stood fix'd her stately highth; and strait the doors,
 Opening their brazen folds, discover wide,
 Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
 And level pavement.—

The semi-colon after *highth*, instead of the comma, seems better adapted to preserve a distinctness in the passage; for

—Th' ascending pile
 Stood fix'd her stately highth
 is not attached to the following sentences by construction, and the connexion seems to demand a stronger point than a comma. *Opening their brazen folds* is the case absolute, universally included between commas. *Within* is not joined in construction
 to

to the preceding verb nor to the subsequent substantive; and is therefore bounded by commas. The following lines, which immediately succeed the above quotation, are printed without a single point, although there occur in them two cases absolute :

——from the arched roof,

Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky.——

Exclusively of the length of this period, which requires time for respiration, points, of more undoubted certainty than those I have inserted, could not have been omitted.

Book

Book V. Line 257.

" From hence no cloud, or, to obstruct his sight,
Star interpos'd, however small he sees,
Not unconform to other shining globes,
Earth and the gard'n of God, with cedars crown'd
Above all hills.

From hence no cloud, &c.] The comma after *interpos'd*, shows that it is here a participle in the ablative case put absolutely; and the construction is, *From hence, no cloud or star being interpos'd to obstruct his sight, he sees, however small it is, appearing very small at that distance, the earth not unlike to other shining globes, and in it Paradise, the garden of God, that was crown'd with cedars, which were higher than the highest hills."*

Taking even this explanation of the passage, as the text at present stands, I conceive the pointing to be inadequate to
the

126 ELEMENTS OF

the meaning. The use of the parenthetical marks might render it more evident. Thus,

From hence, no cloud or (to obstruct his sight)
Star interpos'd, however small, he sees,
Not unconform, &c.

From hence is connected with *he sees*, which accounts for the comma after *hence*; and, *star* not being explanatory of *cloud*, a comma is omitted after *cloud*. But may not *however small* refer to *cloud* or *star*, instead of to *the earth*? Would it not give a stronger idea of the amazing clearness of the prospect, to say, *no cloud or star*, however small, *interpos'd to obstruct his sight*?

Book

Book V. Line 294.

——“ for Nature here

Wanton'd as in her prime, and play'd at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art ; enormous blifs.

So the two first editions point this passage: Dr. Bentley puts no stop after *art* ; for want of which he has fallen into a considerable mistake: instead of *pouring forth more sweet*, he would have us read *pouring forth profuse*. He says *more sweet* than what? nothing: for the comparison is dropt. But the sense is, pouring forth what was the more sweet for being wild and above rule or art.

Pearce.

Or should there not be a comma only after *art* ? And is not *enormous blifs* the accusative case after *pouring forth* ? which blifs was the *more sweet* as it was *wild above rule or art.*”

The

The latter opinion has undoubtedly these advantages; the text of the author is not altered, and the explanation is more consonant with grammatical construction; but, even then, admitting the comma after *art*, another comma should be inserted after *pouring forth*, to guide it, from intervening matter, to the case which it governs; by which, *more sweet* and *wild above rule or art* would be made explanatory sentences, included between commas.

——for Nature here

Wanton'd, as in her prime; and play'd at will
Her virgin fancies, pouring forth, more sweet,
Wild above rule or art, enormous blifs.

But the passage would be less disjointed with these points :

——for Nature here

Wanton'd, as in her prime, and play'd at will;
Her

PUNCTUATION. 129

Her virgin fancies pouring forth more sweet,
Wild above rule or art ;—enormous blifs !

The meaning then becomes ; *for Nature here wanton'd and play'd at will, as in her prime ; pouring forth her virgin fancies more sweet, wild above rule or art ;—enormous blifs !*

Wild above rule or art is made in apposition to *Her virgin fancies pouring forth more sweet* ; *sweet* must be taken adverbially ; and then the whole is declared to be *enormous blifs !* after which the note of admiration seems well adapted to the sentiment of veneration which is implied.

Book V. Line 673.

“ Sleep’st thou, companion dear, what sleep can close
 Thy eye-lids? and remember’st what decree
 Of yesterday, so late hath pass’d the lips
 Of heav’n’s Almighty.

We have printed the passage with Milton’s own punctuation. *Sleep’st thou companion dear*, Εὐδαίς Ἀργεὺς υἱε; Iliad II. 23. *What sleep can close thy eye-lids? and remember’st &c.* that is *when thou remember’st &c.*

—potes hoc sub casu ducere somnos?

Virg. Æn. IV. 560

It is just the same manner of speaking as in II. 730.

—What fury, O Son,

Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart

Against thy father’s head? *and know’st for whom*

at the same time that thou know’st for whom.”

One question seems to be completed in these words; *Sleep'st thou, companion dear?* A second question immediately commences, because a different construction begins; and this second question is not completed till the conditional clause ends. For which reasons I should adopt the following punctuation:

Sleep'st thou, companion dear? What sleep can
close

Thy eye-lids, and remember'st what decree
Of yesterday, so late, hath pass'd the lips
Of heav'n's Almighty?

The latter part of the second question, *and remember'st, &c.* is not a positive affirmation, which it should be, to need no interrogatory mark; but it is a continuance of the question, implying a doubt whether the decree of the Almighty was remembered.

Book V. Line 788.

——“ ye will not, if I trust
To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
Natives and sons of heav'n possess'd before
By none.

Dr. Bentley's false pointing of this passage has led others to mistake the sense of it, as well as himself. He refers the word *possess'd* to *natives and sons*, but should it not rather be referred to *heav'n* the word immediately preceding, there being no comma between them in Milton's own editions, as there is in Dr. Bentley's? And is not the passage to be understood thus, that *No one possess'd 'heav'n before them*, they were a sort of Aborigines? which notion Satan explains more at large in his following speech, ver. 859.

PUNCTUATION. 133

We knew no time when we were not as now ;
 Knew none before us, self-begot, self-rais'd
 By our own quick'ning pow'r, when fatal course
 Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
 Of this our native heav'n, ethereal sons."

The omission of the comma after *heav'n*, and the referring of *possess'd* to *heav'n* only, do not, I think, give that beautiful and strong meaning which the insertion of it might convey. A comma placed after *heav'n* would separate *possess'd* from a connexion with *one* word, and it would therefore relate to the whole preceding sentence. I should *then* understand the passage thus; *ye will not, if I know ye rightly, or if ye know yourselves to be natives and sons of heaven, which is a title and a place possess'd before by none.*

Book VI. Line 44.

"Go Michael of celestial armies prince,
And thou in military prowess next
Gabriel, lead forth to battel these my sons
Invincible," &c.

Upon the first line of the above quotation there is a note, but the criticism is not upon the want of points, which could not have been omitted in any place that so greatly required their presence. *Michael* is the vocative case, and *of celestial armies prince* is a sentence in apposition to *Michael*. *In military prowess next* is in apposition to *Gabriel*, which is likewise in the vocative case. The following points, then, become necessary.

Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,
And thou, in military prowess next,

Gabriel,

PUNCTUATION. 135

Gabriel, lead forth to battel these my sons
Invincible, &c.

Book VI. Line 241.

——“for wide was spread

That war and various, sometimes on firm ground
A standing fight, then soaring on main wing
Tormented all the air; all air seem'd then
Conflicting fire,” &c.

The syntax and sense is; the war was
sometimes a standing fight on the ground,
and sometimes the war soaring on main
wing tormented all the air. *Pearce.*

Let us consider this passage with the following points :

——for wide was spread

That war and various; sometimes on firm ground,
A standing fight, then, soaring on main wing,
Tormented all the air; all air seem'd then
Conflicting fire, &c.

I 4

That

136 ELEMENTS OF

That which I have included between semi-colons is intended to explain the *width and variety of the war*, mentioned in the preceding sentence;

— for wide was spread

That war and various—

A standing fight is in apposition to *sometimes on firm ground*; and *soaring on main wing* is the case absolute. Thus I explain the points I have inserted, which compact, in a manner, the component parts of each sentence, and preserve a distinction which easily brings forth the sense of the author.

Book

Book VI. Line 584.

——“ Immediate in a flame,
But soon obscur'd with smoke, all heav'n appear'd,
From those deep throated engines belch'd, whose
roar

Imbowel'd with outrageous noise the air,
And all her entrails tore, &c.

The construction seems to be, *The roar of which (engines) imbowel'd with outrageous noise tore the air and all her entrails.*
So in ver. 740, 741.

That from *thy* just obedience could revolt,
Whom to obey, &c.

Thy for *of thee*; and to this sense the word *whom* refers. This is common in Milton's poem. Pearce.

The most natural and obvious construction is, *whose roar imbowel'd or fill'd the air with outrageous noise*; but to this it is objected, that it is as much as to say that
the

138 ELEMENTS OF

the roar fill'd the air with roar. Neither do I see how the matter is much mended by saying the roar of the cannon imbowel'd with roar tore the air &c. The cannon I think cannot themselves be properly said to be imbowel'd with noise, though they might imbowel with noise the air. I would therefore endeavor to justify this by other similar passages. It is usual with the poets to put the property of a thing for the thing itself: and as in that verse, II. 654, (where see the note)

A cry of hell-hounds never ceasing bark'd,
we have a *cry of hell-hounds* for the hell-hounds themselves, so here we have the *roar* of the cannon for the cannon themselves; and the *roar* of cannon may as properly be said to imbowel the air *with outrageous noise*, as a *cry* of hell-hounds to *bark*."

The

The latter interpretation of this passage cannot be just, as it imparts a meaning to *imbowel'd* unwarranted by any authority. Dr. Johnson says, *to imbowel* is *to eviscerate, to deprive of the intrails, to exenterate*; whereas here it is explained *to fill*, which is absolutely and unequivocally opposite. I must therefore concur in the former explanation, where *imbowel'd* is considered as the participle, and not the past tense; but a comma after *roar*, a corresponding one after *noise*, and the omission of the comma after *air*, would greatly elucidate the sense; for *whose roar* is the nominative case to *tore*, and *the air and all her entrails* are the objective cases to it: thus;

—whose roar,

Imbowel'd with outrageous noise, the air
And all her intrails tore, &c.

Book VI. Line 680.

“Effulgence of my glory, son belov’d,
 Son in whose face invisible is beheld
 Visibly, what by deity I am, &c.

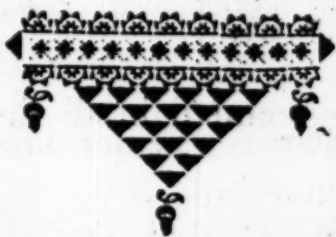
So the first editions have pointed the sentence; and the construction and sense of it is this; *Son in whose face what is invisible is beheld visibly, viz. what I am by deity.* Pearce.

Invisible here is a neuter adjective used for a substantive, and it is in allusion to these texts, Rom. I. 20, *The invisible things of God are clearly seen*, and Col. I. 15, *The image of the invisible God.*”

These interpretations are perfectly consistent with grammatical construction, and, I doubt not, present the true sense
 of

PUNCTUATION. 141

of the passage; but *Son*, repeated in the second line, is as much in the vocative case as *son belov'd*, in the first line: a comma is, therefore, necessary after *Son*.



PARADISE

PARADISE REGAINED.

Book I. Line 189.

“ One day forth walk’d alone, the spirit leading
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
With solitude,” &c.

This is wrong pointed in all the editions
thus,

One day forth walk’d alone, the spirit leading ;
And his deep thoughts, &c.

But at most there should be only a comma after *leading*, for the construction is,
his deep thoughts leading as well as the
spirit.”

Should not even the comma be expunged after *leading*? Else we may be led
to

PUNCTUATION. 143

to conceive *his deep thoughts* to be the nominative case to some verb expected to follow.

Book II. Line 136.

“ If he be man by mother’s side at least,
With more than human gifts from Heav’n adorn’d,
Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.

The tempter had no doubt of Christ’s being a *man by the mother’s side*: but the want of a comma in its due place after *man*, hath puzzled both the sense and the construction. *He is* must be understood at the end of the verse, to support the syntax.

If he be man, by mother’s side at least [he is].

CALTON.

We

We have still preserved the pointing of Milton's own edition; for some perhaps may choose to join the whole together, and understand it thus. Satan had heard him declared from Heaven, and knew him to be the Son of God; and now after the trial he had made of him, he questions whether he be man *even* by the mother's side,

If he be man by mother's side at least.

And it is the purport of Satan in this speech not to say any thing to the evil Spirits that may lessen, but every thing that may raise their idea of his antagonist."

In the latter sense Dr. Johnson seems to understand the expression *at least*, when he defines it *to have a sense implying doubt, to say no more, to say the least, not to say*
all

PUNCTUATION. 145

all that might be said; and, having this meaning, it is necessary to suppose a verb understood, in order to elucidate the passage. It seems easily reconcileable to the subject to take the sense thus; Granting that he is a man by the mother's side, he is adorned from heaven with more than human gifts, with absolute perfections, with divine graces, and with amplitude of mind to greatest deeds. I should not therefore hesitate in erasing the comma after man.



Book III. Line 212.

“ My error was my error, and my crime
 My crime ; whatever for itself condemn'd,
 And will alike be punish'd, whether thou
 Reign or reign not ;——

This is the pointing in Milton's own edition, and I conceive the expression to be elleiptical, and this to be the meaning, *My error was my error, and my crime my crime ; whatever it be, it is for itself condemned, and will alike be punished, &c.* and I do not see how the passage is emended, or the sense improved, by placing the semi-colon after *my crime whatever*, as Mr. Sympson prescribes ; or by blotting out the semi-colon after *crime*, and putting a comma at *whatever*, as Mr. Meadowcourt directs.”

In

In passages constructed so obscurely, with so many words understood, general rules, I before observed, would serve us but little; and we must endeavour to place such points as are consistent with analogy; that is, points similar to those which would be used, if the sentence were expressed at length. Let us consider this quotation explained: *My error was my error, and my crime was my crime, whatever such error or such crime was, condemned for itself, and will alike be punished, &c.* Now let us select the words printed in Italic, and take with them all the points, as they at present stand, after the explanatory words printed in Roman characters:

My error was my error, and my crime

My crime, whatever, for itself condemn'd,

K z

And

148 E L E M E N T S O F

And will alike be punish'd, whether thou
Reign or reign not;—

Whatever is in apposition to *My error*
was my error, and my crime my crime; con-
demn'd is a participle agreeing with *my*
error and with *my crime*. Therefore, if
we keep in mind the words understood,
as explained above, will not the point-
ing adopted be adequate to the meaning?



Book

Indue
Appe
Migh
Now
A vic

The
accord
but ye
served

A vic

For th
ascendi

ascendi

Roman

That

Book IV. Line 97.

——“ with what ease,

Indued with regal virtues as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne,
Now made a styè, and in his place ascending;
A victor people free from servile yoke?

There should be no comma after *victor* according to the author's own correction; but yet I think all the editors have preserved the first mistaken pointing,

——and in his place ascending

A victor, people free from servile yoke?

For the meaning is not that our Saviour ascending a victor might free, &c. but ascending might free a victor people, as the Romans are afterwards called ver. 132,

That people victor once, &c.”

To preserve this doubtful passage in the latter and more probable meaning, the following points are necessary;

—and, in his place ascending,
A victor-people free from servile yoke?

in his place ascending is the case absolute; *and* is a part of the latter sentence, beginning with *A victor-people*; and I propose a hyphen between *victor-people*, because that becomes one word, compounded of two substantives.

Book IV. Line 409.

——“ and either tropic now

'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n, the clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
Fierce ran with lightning mix'd, water with fire
In ruin reconcil'd :——

Place the stops thus :

—— and either tropic now

'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n, the
clouds &c.

It thundered from both tropics, that is perhaps from the right and from the left. The ancients had very different opinions concerning the right and the left side of the world. Plutarch says, that Aristotle, Plato, and Pythagoras were of opinion, that the east is the right side, and the west the left ; but that Empedocles held that the right side is towards the summer

tropic, and the left towards the winter tropic. Πυθαγορας, Πλατων, Αριστοτελης, δεξια τε κοσμος τα ανατολικά μέρη, α'φ' ων η αρχη της κινήσεως· αριστερα· δε, τα δυτικά. Εμπεδοκλης δεξια μεν τα κατα τον θερινον τροπικον· αριστερα δε τα κατα τον χειμερινον. De Placit. Philos. II. 10. Αιγυπτιοι οιοιονται τα μεν ιωα, τε κοσμος προσωπον ειναι, τα δε προς βορραν, δεξια, τα δε προς νοτον αριστερα. Id. de Isid. p. 363. If by *either tropic* be meant the *right side* and the *left*, by *both ends of Heav'n* may be understood, *before* and *behind*. I know it may be objected, that the tropics cannot be the one the right side, and the other the left, *to those* who are placed without the tropics: but I do not think that objection to be very material. I have another exposition to offer, which is thus: It thundered all along the Heav'n, from the north pole to the tropic of Cancer, from thence to the tropic of Capricorn, from thence to the south pole. From pole to pole. The *ends of Heav'n*

are

PUNCTUATION. 153

are the poles. This is a poetical tempest, like that in Virgil, *Æn.* I.

Intonuere poli——

Id est extremæ partes cœli——a quibus totum cœlum contonuisse significat. Servius.

JORTIN.

Mr. Sympson proposes to read and point the passage thus ;

—— and either tropic now

'Gan thunder ; *at* both ends of heav'n the clouds
Ec.

Mr. Meadowcourt points it thus ;

—— and either tropic now

'Gan thunder, and both ends of heav'n : the clouds
Ec.

But after all I am still for preserving Milton's own punctuation, unless there be very good reason for departing from it, and I understand the passage thus : *and either tropic now 'gan thunder*, it thundered from the north, and from the south,
for

♦ for this I conceive to be Milton's meaning, though the expression is inaccurate, the situation of our Saviour and Satan being not within the tropics: *and both ends of Heav'n*, that is, and *from* or *at* both ends of Heav'n, the præposition being omitted, as is frequent in Milton, and several instances were given in the notes on the Paradise Lost. See particularly Dr. Pearce's note on I. 282, *and from both ends of Heav'n, the clouds &c.* This storm is describ'd very much like one in Tasso, which was raised in the same manner by evil spirits. See Canto 7. St. 114, 115. for I would not lengthen this note, too long already with the quotation."

After

After such able commentators, dare an obscure critic venture a hint? To endeavour well is some merit, and his best apology for the following alteration of the points :

— and either tropic now
 'Gan thunder and both ends of heav'n; the clouds,
 From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd,
 Fierce ran with lightning mix'd; water with fire
 In ruin reconcil'd :—

In this passage three distinct images are presented; viz. 1st, *and either tropic and both ends of heav'n, now 'gan thunder*; 2d, *the clouds, being pour'd from many a horrid rift abortive, fierce ran with lightning mix'd*; and, 3d, *water with fire in ruin reconcil'd*. But, as it is pointed in the editions of Milton, one image is confounded with another, the syntax confused, and the meaning of course obscured,

156 ELEMENTS OF

scured, by so repeated a use of the comma. The semi-colons, which I have introduced, so effectually attach to each image its component parts, that the mind, readily perceiving the sense, is left at liberty to contemplate the awful beauties of the scene.



SAMSON

SAMSON AGONISTES, Line 652.

“ Many are the sayings of the wise
 In ancient and in modern books inroll'd,
 Extolling patience as the truest fortitude ;
 And to the bearing well of all calamities,
 All chances incident to man's frail life, 656
 Consolatories writ
 With study'd argument, &c.

There is a full stop at the end of this line [656] in all the editions, but there should be only a comma, as the sense evinces, the construction being *And consolatories writ with &c. to the bearing well &c.* Milton himself corrected it in the first edition ; but when an error is once made, it is sure to be perpetuated through all the editions.”

True ;

True; but, as the conjunction *And*, in line 655, belongs to *Consolitariae writ*, in line 657, it should be separated from

— to the bearing well of all calamities,
All chances incident to man's frail life,
by the insertion of a comma after it.

COMUS, Line 341.

“ And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

Our greater or lesser bear-star. Calisto, the daughter of Lycaon king of Arcadia was changed into the greater bear called also *Helice*, and her son Arcas into the lesser, called also *Cynosura*, by observing of which the Tyrians and Sidonians steered their course, as the Grecian mariners did by the other. So Ovid. Fast. III. 107.

Esse duas Arctos; quarum Cynosura petatur
Sidoniis, Helicen Graia carina notet.

VALERIUS

VALERIUS FLACCUS I. 17.

—neque enim in Tyrias Cynosura carinas
Certior, aut Graiis Helice servanda magistris.

The *star of Arcady* may be explained to signify the lesser bear, and so Mr. Peck understands it: but Milton would hardly make use of two such different names for the same thing, and distinguish them by the disjunctive *or* between them. The *star of Arcady*, like *Arcadium sidus*, may be a general name for the greater and the lesser bear, as in Seneca, Oedip. 476.

Quasque despectat vertice summo

Sidus Arcadium, geminumque plaustrum :

but the following words *or Tyrian Cynosure* shew evidently that by the former is meant the greater bear, as by the latter is plainly meant the lesser."

This is one among many instances of the utility of the rule respecting the disjunctive *or*, which must be in the reader's
recol-

recollection. The comma after *Arcady* makes *Tyrian Cynosure* explanatory of *our star of Arcady*; but, as the text is expounded in the comment, they were two separate constellations. The omission, therefore, of the comma would evidently mark the sense, provided the Rule were universally attended to.



IN Page 183 of Warton's Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser, I find the following comment, which is too nearly allied to the subject to be omitted in this work.

“ The image of the angels singing in their trinal triplicities, puts me in mind of a passage in Milton's Lycidas, where the pointing seems to be wrong.

There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
Who sing, and singing in their glory move.

According to the present pointing, the sense is, “ The saints who are in solemn “ troops, and sweet societies, entertain “ him;” or, entertain him in [among] their solemn troops, and sweet societies: but if the comma were struck off after *Societies*, another and more beautiful meaning would be introduced, viz. “ The saints

L

“ who

“who SING IN solemn troops and sweet
“societies, entertain him,” &c.

The elegant sense which Mr. Warton has given to this passage is but an additional proof of his critical abilities; and, were his commentary ever present, points would be unnecessary: but I conceive the punctuation should be as under, in order to preserve the meaning:

There entertain him all the faints above,
In solemn troops and sweet societies
Who sing; and, singing, in their glory move.

But Mr. Warton, in his edition of the *Minora* of Milton, has inserted commas after *troops* and *societies*; which is contrary to the practice he recommends in his *Observations* on Spenser.

HAVING

HA V I N G given my reasons for the introduction of the points in the preceding quotations, and endeavoured to establish the rectitude of the practice upon principles of grammar and analogy, it may not be useless to present a selection of essential and general rules; such as may serve to guide, in plain compositions, to a just division of complex sentences into their component parts. An extraordinary collocation of words will demand peculiar analogy; and it must, therefore, be evident that such cases cannot be subjected to the influence of general rules, although they are certainly referable to general principles: those principle, I trust, have pervaded the cases produced in the prior part of this work; which neces-

farily assumed the form of reasoning and demonstration, as it had to remove obstructions, ere a foundation could be laid.

But I cannot refuse dedicating a little space to the author of the "*Essay on Punctuation.*" That gentleman made a progress in elucidating the doctrine of points, undoubtedly greater than had been attempted, by producing his essay in the form of systematical rules; and I doubt not of obtaining his concurrence, while I leave envy to dogmatize, and while I candidly discriminate his merits. The man of real literature receives correction with pleasure; it is only the pedant who disclaims conviction*.

Essential

* Of the following rules, the 5th, 6th, 7th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 16th, are to be found, *literatim*, in the "*Essay on Punctuation.*"

PUNCTUATION. 169

Essential and General RULES.

I.

Three or more substantives, pronouns, adverbs, &c. in the same case, &c. and in immediate succession, are separated by commas.

EXAMPLE.

Climate, soil, laws, customs, food, and other accidental differences, have produced an astonishing variety in the complexion, features, manners, and faculties, of the human species.

II.

Two substantives, or any two words of the same part of speech, connected by the conjunction *and*, do not admit of a comma between them.

EXAMPLE.

Painting and sculpture are imitations of visible objects.

III.

Substantives, or any words of the same part of speech, immediately following one another, in the same case, tense, &c. and joined in pairs by the conjunction *and*, are separated in pairs by commas.

EXAMPLE.

Interest and ambition, honour and shame, friendship and enmity, gratitude and revenge, are the prime movers in all public transactions.

IV.

Two substantives, or any two words of the same part of speech, connected by the disjunctive *or*, should have a comma between them, if the latter be explanatory of the former*.

EXAMPLE.

Milton too frequently uses technical words, or terms of art.

V.

* See page 5 of this work.

PUNCTUATION. 167

V.

Nouns in apposition, that is, nouns added to other nouns in the same case, by way of explication, or illustration, when accompanied with adjuncts, are separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

EXAMPLE.

Cupid, the god of love, was the son of Venus, the goddess of beauty,

VI.

Two nouns in apposition, not accompanied with adjuncts, the latter noun forming, as it were, part of a proper name, are not divided.

EXAMPLE.

The Emperor Antoninus wrote an excellent book.

VII.

Expressions in a direct address, or what is called, in Latin, the vocative case, are

L. 4

separated

168 ELEMENTS OF

separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.

EXAMPLE.

Beware, Amasia, of the artful sycophant.

VIII.

A noun or pronoun, in what is called the case absolute, and the participle, &c. with which it is connected, when it commences a sentence, should be separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma.

EXAMPLES.

Harold being slain in the field, the conqueror marched directly to London.

Harold being slain in the field caused great joy to the friends of the conqueror *.

IX.

* In this latter example, *Harold being slain in the field* is the complex nominative case to the verb *caused*, and does not therefore admit of a comma.

PUNCTUATION. 169

IX.

If the case absolute occur in the middle of a sentence, it requires a comma before and after it.

EXAMPLE.

God, from the mount of Sinai, whose grey top
Shall tremble, he descending, will himself ordain
Them laws.

X.

Two adjectives, belonging to a substantive immediately following, with or without conjunctions, admit the intervention of no point *.

EXAMPLE.

Beware of a censorious four severity.

XI.

Three or more adjectives, belonging to the same substantive, are separated from each

* See page 9 of this work.

170 ELEMENTS OF

each other, and from their concordant substantive, by commas.

EXAMPLE.

Sacred history is a simple, chaste, faithful, dispassionate, impartial, detail of facts.

XII.

Two verbs having the same nominative case, and immediately connected by the conjunction *and*, are not separated by a comma.

EXAMPLE.

The study of natural history expands and elevates the mind.

XIII.

Three or more verbs having the same nominative case, and immediately following one another, are separated by commas.

EXAMPLE.

Exercise ferments the humours, casts them into their proper channels, throws off redundancies, and assists nature in her necessary operations.

XIV.

XIV.

Several verbs in the infinitive mood, depending on one common word, and immediately succeeding one another, are divided by commas.

EXAMPLE.

The Spartan youth were accustomed to go barefoot, to lie on the ground, to suffer heat and cold, to live on the most ordinary provisions, to be engaged in continual exercise, and to be enured to blows and wounds.

XV.

When the expression is such as would be translated into Latin by a preposition and a gerundial adjective, a comma must always precede; for that expression, in English, is strictly rendered *in order to*, although it more frequently differs not in form from the infinitive mood.

EXAMPLE.

An old man must be a father, *to bear* the follies and absurdities of youth*.

XVI.

* Vide pag. 46, not. w.

XVI.

A remarkable expression, or a short observation, in the form of a quotation, ought to be separated from the words which introduce and follow it. If the quotation be very short, or closely connected with the context, a comma will be sufficient.

EXAMPLE.

Swift says, no wise man ever wished himself younger.

XVII.

Between a nominative case and its verb, or between a verb and its objective case, no point can be admitted, provided they immediately succeed each other; but all words that intervene, except an adverb or the like, are to be included between commas; and, when the nominative and objective cases are not connected with their verbs by juxta-position, it is universal to lead from one to the other by commas.

E X A M-

PUNCTUATION. 173

EXAMPLES.

Epicurus, we are told, left behind him three hundred volumes of his works.

Epicurus undoubtedly left behind him three hundred volumes of his works.

XVIII.

A semi-colon may be used, in dividing sentences, where the grammatical construction is not fully complete.

EXAMPLE.

—pensive Winter, cheer'd by him,
Sits at the social fire; and happy hears
Th' excluded tempest idly rave along.

XIX.

A colon is admissible only where grammatical construction is quite perfect.

EXAMPLE.

Then too the pillar'd dome magnific heav'd
Its ample roof; and Luxury within
Pour'd out her glittering stores: the canvas smooth,
With glowing life protuberant, to the view
Embodied

174 ELEMENTS OF

Embodied rose: the statue seem'd to breathe
And soften into flesh, beneath the touch
Of forming art, imagination-flush'd.

XX.

Parenthetical marks demand every point which the sense would require, if the parenthesis were omitted, except when the parenthesis is interrogative or exclamatory. *

EXAMPLES.

— as armies, at the call
Of trumpet, (For of armies thou hast heard,)
Troop to their standard, &c.

PAR. LOST, VII. 296.

— therefore,

* When the parenthesis is short, and neither interrogative nor exclamatory, the point may be thus used;

“The histories of Herodotus (says he), though delivered in metre, would not constitute a poem.”

PUNCTUATION. 175

— therefore, th' omnipotent
Eternal Father (for where is not he
Present ?) thus to his Son audibly spake.

PAR. LOST, VII. 516.

F I N I S.



271 ZOTANTOMU



271 ZOTANTOMU



I

Journal
of